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A  
*Catechetical Course*  
O F  
**S E R M O N S**  
For the whole Y E A R.  
Being, an  
**EXPLANATION**  
O F T H E  
**Church-Catechism,**

I N  
Fifty two distinct Discourses on so many several *Texts of Scripture*. Wherein are briefly contain'd, The most necessary Points of *Christian Doctrine*.

**V O L. II.**

By **PETER NEWCOME**, M. A. Vicar  
of *Hackney in Middlesex*.

**The Third Edition.**

**L O N D O N:**

Printed by *J. R.* for *John Wyat*, at the *Rose* in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, MDCCXII.



A  
Catechetical Course  
OF  
SERMONS  
For the whole YEAR.  
Being an  
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OF THE  
Church Catechism

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of Texts of Scripture as are briefly  
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For Bond Street

LONDON.

Printed by J. R. for W. Bayly, at the Rising Sun in  
Greenwich, MDCCLXXII.

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SER-

## S E R M O N XXVI.

O N T H E

## Fifth Commandment.

Exod. xx. 12.

*Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long upon the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

**A**S the Sum of Practical Religion consists of our Duty towards God and Man, so are we taught our Duty towards God in the *First Table*, before we are admitted to learn our Duty towards Man in the *Second Table*: That being the *Foundation* as well as *Limitation* of This; it being for God's sake, and in Obedience to his Will, that we are obliged to Man. And therefore *this Commandment*, saith St. John, *have we from him, that he who loveth God,* <sup>1 John.4.</sup> *love his Brother also.* The whole Law is Love; <sup>21</sup> whereof God is the Principal Object, and Man next to him.

Having then already considered the Particular Instances wherein God will have us express such our Love to himself in the *First Table Duties*, we are now to proceed with the *Decalogue*, to consider

B

der



der likewise the Particular Instances wherein he will have us express such our Love to each other in the *Second Table Duties*. Which are in Number *Six*; tho in Nature, by some reckoned to be only *Two*; obliging to Duties *Relative* and *Absolute*.

Of the first sort doth this *First Commandment* in the *Second Table*, which is the *Fifth* in the *Decalogue*, plainly consist: Including the Duties of *Superiours* and *Inferiours* towards one another, under the Titles of *Father* and *Mother*. And which is justly therefore placed *First* in this *Second Table*, and next to the Duties relating immediately to the Worship of God in the *First Table*; because *such*, next under God, are the Authors and Preservers of *Being* and *Order* among Men, bearing some Resemblance of the Relation that is between God and them; and therefore next after him to be duely regarded and treated among us.

To our Worship therefore of God, we immediately joyn our *Honour* for *Father* and *Mother*. And being well principled in our Duty towards God, herein we lay the first Foundation of our Duty towards *Man*.

The Precept evidently consists of two Parts, viz.

I. A Duty enjoyned. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother.*

II. A Promise annexed. *That thy Days may be long upon the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

I. The Duty enjoyned is to Honour our Father and Mother.

Who are  
our Father  
and Mo-  
ther.

The words *Father* and *Mother* are here of a Comprehensive Signification, not to be limited to their

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their Grammatical Import, but extended to all Superiours, whether in an *Oeconomical*, *Political* or *Ecclesiastical* State, as expressing Authority in its Original, and being applicable to any impressed therewith, and being a *Relative* implying also its *Correlative*. So that the Command which concerns *Father* and *Mother* in any Sense, necessarily includes the Correlation in the same Sense. And therefore in an *Oeconomical* Sense are hereby meant not only our Natural Parents that begat us, who are in the most Literal and Prime Signification *Father* and *Mother* to the *Children* begotten by them; but also *Masters* with respect to their *Servants*, on which account we read the *Syrian Leper* called *Father* by his *Domesticks*, whose *Paternal Care* obligeth to a *Filial* observance.

In a *Political* Sense the words are used to signify not only *Gouvernours* and *Magistrates* who succeeding in the Place and Office of Parents are now *Patres Patriæ*, the Publick Fathers, having the same Power devolved upon them, which formerly resided in the Fathers of Families; but also, even all others who have Superiority in any Gift of God, whether of Grace, Riches, Age or Knowledge, which doth entitle them to the Exercise, and much more to this Name of Authority. And accordingly are we commanded to treat the *Elders* as *Fathers*, and the *Elder Women* as *Mothers*. And on the other of which accounts we find *Joseph* acknowledging himself to be a *Father* to *Pharaoh*; and *Jabal* said to be the *Father* of such as dwell in *Tents*; and *Jubal* the *Father* of such as handle the *Harp* and Organ.

In an *Ecclesiastical* State this honourable Title is no less duly conferred on the *Ministers of the Gospel*: And that not only because they are Superiour

riour to the People in things appertaining unto God, having the Dispensation of the Grace of the Gospel committed unto them; but also thro' the concurrence of the Holy Spirit's Operation with their Ministry, they beget Souls unto Jesus Christ. On which account St. Paul tells the *Corinthians*, that he was their *Father*, having begotten them thro' the Gospel.

1 Cor. 4.  
1.

What the  
Honour  
due to  
them.

The *Honour* required from us, and relating to an Object so various, must necessarily be no less various it self; implying all those several Acts of Duty belonging to these several Relations. And since what any Relative enjoyns, implies also the Duty of its Correlative; hereby we must understand not only the Behaviour towards Superiours in every Relation, regulated; but likewise the Behaviour of every such Superiour towards their several Inferiours directed. Herein then is equally concerned, in the state *Oeconomical*, the Duty of Children towards Parents, and of Parents towards their Children: As likewise the Duty of Masters towards their Servants, and of Servants towards their Masters. In the State *Political* is, in like manner, equally concern'd the Duty of Governours towards Subjects, and of Subjects towards their Governours; as also of all kind of Superiours towards their Inferiours, and of Inferiours towards their Superiours. And finally, in the state *Ecclesiastical*, is concerned the Duty of Ministers towards their People, and of the People towards their Ministers.

Of so comprehensive a Nature is the Command before us, including the Duties of all Relations under this General Injunction of *Honouring Father and Mother*. Whatever therefore, is any where in the Holy Scriptures enjoyn'd in any of these Relations,

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Relations, we are to refer hereto as Explicatory of, and Bound upon us by virtue of this Commandment.

To comprehend then fully the Obligation of the Precept, the Duties of such Relations ought severally and distinctly to be considered. For which end a brief hint referring thereto may be serviceable. Accordingly,

1. *In the Oeconomical State*, understand by *Honouring Father and Mother* the Duties of the several Relations between Superiours and Inferiours in a Family herein enjoyed: Which are of two kinds, viz. 1. Of *Parents and Children*, and 2. of *Masters and Servants*. Between which indeed some insert the Relation between *Husband and Wife*, because of the Superiority belonging to the Husband, tho' not without a much nearer Equality. The Duties of which Relation seem, nevertheless, to be more properly referred to the *Seventh Commandment*, where they will meet with their due Consideration, being reserved for that place.

*The Relation between Natural Parents, and their Children*, is what answers the most immediate Intention of the present Commandment, according to the Primary Import of the words *Father and Mother*; wherein is imply'd the distinct Duties of Children towards their Parents, and of Parents towards their Children.

*The Duty of Children towards their Parents*, is what the Command primarily expresses in the *Honour* it obligeth such to give them, according to the Direction of God's Word; which will have Parents honoured by the *Reverence, Obedience and Retribution* of their Children. Reverencing them in their *Hearts*, by a due Esteem and Valuation; in their *Words*,



Words, by fair and obliging Language; in *Actions*, by observation of due Distance, Modest Behaviour, and submissive Postures of Body, made respectful by Custom. And tho' Parents may not merit such Esteem, yet should Children endeavour to hide their Infirmities, not only from Others, but even from Themselves; upon no account, *Despising, Deriding* and much less *Cursing* them; which tho' the guise too common among Wicked Children, yet is severely threatned in the Holy Scriptures. And yet *Reverence* is but meer Formality, if not Mockery, without *Obedience*; wherewith therefore, *Children* are further to *Honour* their Parents, by duly complying to their Will; so as, in all things possible and reasonable, to desire their Consent, to comply with their Advice, to imitate their good Examples, and to obey their Commands. And, finally, it is no less their Duty to *honour* them, with *Retribution*, by requiting Benefits received from them, so far as the One is able and the Other may need; nothing being too much in return to them, from whom next under God all hath been received. For Parents are a kind of Gods to their Children, having Affections, and performing Actions most like to his towards Men; and to whom therefore *Honour*, next after God, and in degree resembling that which is Divine, is indispensibly due. Whence Disobedience to Parents was Death among the *Jews*, and the Curse of God was annexed to it also; which all Nations have agreed to call *Impiety*, as implying it to be more than Injustice or Inhumanity to offend against a Parent.

*Duty of  
Parents.*

The Duty of Parents towards their Children; or rather unto God concerning them, tho' not express'd, yet is imply'd in the *Commandment*, equally

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ly obliging the Correlative and Relative, and in all unequal Relations, tho' the Superiority rests but in One, yet the Duty is divided between both Parts. And therefore, the Obligation of *Children* to honour their *Parents*, obligeth *Parents* to such a Treatment of their Children as may both become and merit such *Honour*. And this may be considered with respect both to the *Temporal* and *Spiritual* Good of Children; the First implying *Maintenance*, the Latter *Education*.

*Maintenance of Children* implies their careful *Pro-Maintenance*, due *Nourishment*, and a prudent *Provison* <sup>nance.</sup> by their *Parents* proportionable to the the *Abilities* of the One, and seasonably to the *Needs* of the Other.

The Christian *Education of Children* obligeth their *Educators*, <sup>tion.</sup> *Parents* to bring them early to *Baptism*; as the first and (in respect to the real Advantages conveyed by this Sacrament) the *greatest* Kindness they can express towards them. After which (as there appears Capacity) they are to *Instruct* them that they may both understand, and practise their Duty in the whole Compass of it to God, their Neighbours, and Themselves; setting before them a *good Example* for their Guide; and keeping them for their security, under a *good Discipline*, even of seasonable and due *Encouragement*, as well as of moderate, calm, and early *Correction*, to all which they should add constant and earnest *Prayers*; which have ever been observed to be very effectual in *Parents*, whether for the Good or Evil of their Children; (on whose *Curse* or *Blessing* the Fortune of Posterity hath depended; as was evidenc'd in the Blasted Seed of *Cham*, and the prosperous Race of the *Patriarchs*.) And without which all other Endeavours in the Education of them may prove ineffectual.

B 4

To

Ecc. 7.  
11.

To be then a *Parent* is surely a Concern of great weight and moment ; every *Child* being a considerable Charge entrusted with such by God ; a right Discharge whereof is of the very greatest concern to our *Children*, to our *Selves*, and to the *Publick*. *Children* will be the better for their Parents vertuous Institutions, when they may not be the better for any thing else they have or could have done for them ; which will stand them in stead, when nothing else will ; and which we may do for them, when we can do nothing else ; nor will they so absolutely need any thing else from us, as this : *Wisdom*, and especially Heavenly Wisdom, saith the Preacher, *is good with an Inheritance* ; all the Comforts of any State or Condition in this Life, depending only on the Principles of Vertue and Goodness.

Nor do *Parents* consult less their own Good in the Pious Education of their Children ; whereby alone they may secure to themselves some of the prime Blessings both for this World and the Other ; having secured the refreshing Testimony of a well-discharged Conscience, so as to *wash their Hands in Innocency* from the Guilt of sharing in their Childrens Sins and Ruin, should they miscarry ; and taking the most effectual Course of enjoying the unspeakable Blessing of Good and Dutiful Children while they live here ; and of lying down at last in their Graves, with the transporting Hopes of meeting them all again with endless Joys in Glory hereafter.

Neither, finally, will the *Publick* be less hereby obliged : since Families are Nurseries for both Church and State, on the management whereof their Happiness or Misery doth wholly depend ; so that none can any other way deserve better of Mankind

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Mankind, or become greater Benefactors to the World, than such as contrive and endeavour for a Religious Off-spring.

And, Oh, happy the Children that have such Parents! And happy the Parents that thus take care of their Children! Good Children being the Hopes of Posterity; and good Parents being consequently the best Common-wealths-men. But Alas for those both Parents and Children, and too many such (God knows!) there are, by whom this Duty is not only neglected, but the quite contrary Sin practised. For there are some Parents such Brutes, such Monsters, such, I had almost said, Devils, *as not to know how to give good things to their Children; but instead of Bread, give them a Stone; instead of Fish, give them a Serpent; instead of an Egg, give them a Scorpion; and instead of bringing them up in the Fear and Nurture of the Lord,* educate them to prophane and defie him. Even they who ought to be the great Teachers and Examples of Virtue and Holiness, becoming the chief Encouragers and Patterns of Vice and Villainy to their Children, Instead of restraining them from Evil, they countenance them in it, and check all forward Inclinations to Goodness, till at last they make them *ten times more the Children of Wrath,* than they were even by that Corrupt Nature derived from them; and hereby *treasure up* both for their Children and themselves, *Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God.* Nor surely are there any greater Traytors and Enemies to their Country, who Plot more destructively against the Publick Peace and Religion, than Wicked and Careless Parents, who suffering their Children to be Vicious, lay the Foundation of an endless Mischiefs.

Let



Let Parents and Children then, consider well their Duties herein, and so behave themselves towards each other, as to answer the Obligation of this Commandment, which so directly and primarily is intended for them; and which in the first Relation, in a sence Oeconomical, is the Import of *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*.

*Between  
Masters  
and Ser-  
vants.*

2. *The other Relation herein is of Master and Servant*; wherein also there is an acknowledged Superiority, upon the Account whereof, the Title of *Father* is attributed in the Scriptures to Masters by their Servants, whom tho' Masters do not beget, yet they provide for and govern with a Paternal Regard and Affection, together with their own Children; and, in St. Paul's Oeconomy, *the*
- Gal. 4. 1. *Heir differs nothing from a Servant, while he is in his*
- 2 K. 5. 13. *Minority. Wherefore Naaman the Syrian was called Father also by his Servants, as differing nothing from his very Children in the substantial part of Affection and Care incumbent on him; what difference there is, being only in the Degree hereof towards them; the same Commandment obliging him to both. And therefore in this Relation also is to be considered the Duty of both Servants towards their Masters, and of Masters towards their Servants. Both being included in the Precept which expresseth only one of the Relatives.*

*The Duty  
of Ser-  
vants.*

- The Duty, then, of Servants towards their Masters, is to Honour them, as in a sence their Parents, with a Filial Behaviour becoming such Relation. Which is what the Apostle enjoyns, when he says,*
- 1 Tim. 6. 1. *Let as many Servants as are under the Yoke, count their own Masters worthy of all Honour. The Obligation being Indefinite upon all in Servitude, whether it be by Constraint or Consent.*

*By*

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By *Constraint* Men are made *Servants* these three ways, By right of Conquest, By Sentence of Condemnation, and by Purchase. By *Consent* they become such by Compact, and are either Days-men, Menial Servants, or Apprentices; from all whom less of *Honour* cannot be due than what *Reverence*, *Obedience*, and *Submission* impliest towards their own Masters.

*Reverence* is essential to Servitude; being the *Reverence* only Principle from which good Service may be expected; which the *Scriptures* term *Fear*, as it consists of a Mixture of Love and Fear, without which the Master's *Honour* can no way be upheld among his Servants. And therefore, the Prophet *Malachy* observes in the Name of whom he speaketh, that a *Son* honoureth his *Father*, and a *Servant* his *Master*; *If I be a Father, where is mine Honour? If I be a Master, where is my Fear?* And *St. Paul* hath commanded Servants to be obedient to their Masters with *Fear* and *Trembling*; and with all *Eph. 6. 5.* *Fear*, saith *St. Peter*: It not seeming enough for *1 Pet. 2.* such, only to do their Master's Business, and to *18.* make the Offer of their Service, but to esteem and respect whom they serve, both in their *Speech*, by speaking decently to, and respectfully of them; and in their *Actions*, by a chearful mannerly deportment towards them.

Due *Obedience* is a necessary Acknowledgment of, *Obedience* and commendable Deference to Authority; whence Servants immediately derive their Denomination; even from their being *Subservient* to their Masters Commands, and obliged to serve his Pleasure. Wherein that such may neither be imposed upon by unreasonable Commands, nor yet charged with Dishonest Service, Care must be had to square their Obedience by right *Measure*, and in a right *Manner*.  
The

*The Measure of Servants Obedience* seems to be limited by *Possibility, Lawfulness, Agreement and Custom*. And therefore, when the *Scriptures* en-  
 Col. 3. 22. joyn so absolutely, *Servants to obey in all things their*  
 Eph. 6. 5. *Masters according to the Flesh*, it must necessarily be understood with a Limitation of *all things* as consistent with Duty to God, to what is feasible, to what more particularly is covenanted expressly for, and to whatever, Law or Custom hath moreover made requisite and reasonable to be done by them. For, no Man can be obliged to do what is not to be done; nor to commit knowingly a Sin at the Will of Man, which is not within the compass of Human Power to command, because against a Superiour Authority; nor yet to excuse what he hath hired himself and promised to do; and is universally deemed meet to be included in Service: So that in *all things* whereinfoever the Master can be reasonably served, therein the Servant is bound to yield him his Obedience. *The manner* of expressing which, the *Scriptures* also evidently represent, with these three Qualifications, *viz.* of *Diligence*; in as much as the *Slothful* is expressly  
 Mar. 25. called a *Wicked Servant*: Of *Fidelity*, both in Trust  
 26. and Speech, that it may be an Honest and True  
 Eph. 6. 7. Service; and of *singleness of Heart*, as this implies both Conscience and Chearfulness, whereby the meanest Office becomes both ennobled and acceptable.

*Submissi-  
on.*

In fine, a *Christian Submission* also to the Master's Censure is of the Essence of Servitude, whose Will is no less to be *suffered* than *done* by Servants. And this the *Scriptures* very expressly insert in the Duty of such; and both strictly command and greatly  
 Tit. 2. 9. encourage it. For, God is the common Master of  
 1 Pet. 1. us all; and we all are but Fellow-Servants to  
 18, &c. him;

him ; and his Service which he hath commanded us, is to serve one another ; and the Difference is not much, and the Advantage perhaps less, whether this be as Master or Servant, so it be with Integrity and Sincerity. Such Circumstances are only Momentaneous, and the Duties thereof are equally both obliging and difficult ; the Servant is not more ty'd up than the Master, nor the Master more at liberty than the Servant, with whom he is no way behind hand in Duty ; as will appear from considering also,

*The Duty of Masters towards their Servants ;* *The Duty of Masters*  
 who tho' they are not obliged to Honour, yet are they to merit and reward the Honour, they are entitled to from their Servants, by a suitable treatment of them, express'd in their Government over, and Provision for them.

Government is the only Security of Masters Authority, without which, Servants will grow first Familiar and then Contemptuous. It consists chiefly in Commanding and Correcting. The Commanding of Masters in respect to their Servants, ought to be regulated with great Prudence and good Conscience, so as to keep up their Authority and secure their Duty, and therefore must be regarded both as to the Matter and Manner of them. The Matter of a Master's Commands to his Servants must be only such as is adapted to his own Authority and his Servant's Capacity ; and therefore must be nothing but what is lawful, because only in such things, is Service due to him. Nothing but what is possible, and that in it self ; which otherwise cannot be done by any One ; and to the Person Commanded, which otherwise cannot be done by him ; in both which Instances such Commands are foolish. And Nothing, moreover, but what



*what is reasonable* ; which otherwise is vain and ridiculous, exposing to Contempt. The *Manner* of Imposing such their Commands, ought to be with such a mixture of *Gravity* and *Lenity* as may at once both constrain and encourage to Obedience. The *Correction of Servants* requires the greatest Caution and Prudence to keep within the Bounds of Duty, and to obtain success thereby. And therefore, Regard, for this End, must necessarily be had to a *Good Intention* and *Moderate Execution* therein. That as Humour and Passion are to be quite discarded, and only Reformation and Example be regarded herein ; so Moderation ought to appear in every Infliction, that it may neither exceed the proportion of the Fault, because that is Cruelty ; nor unbecome the Master to execute, or the Servant to suffer, because that also will be Reproachful to both. And therefore, where *Reproof* is successless, *Discarding* such contumacious Servants is usually the best Discipline, though severer methods, in some cases, is both lawful and necessary. And this for faults not only against our selves, wherein few Masters are backwards ; but also and more especially, for faults against God, who is the Master of us all, and whose Honour is concern'd, which ought to be dearer to us than all our other Concerns and Interest. Of all the Disorders therefore in a Family by Servants, every Master ought to be most jealous of, and vigilantly severe against Sin, as being ever attended with the worst consequences, either by the Contagion of its Example, or the Prejudice of its Guilt. So that Servants that will not be admonished by us to serve God, neither ought they to be suffered by us to serve our selves. Not the best service of a wicked Servant, being sufficient  
Recom-

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Recompence for their Rebellion against God, and the Hazard they expose all they meddle with of ours, to Divine Judgments.

Thus are Masters to command, and thus to correct, which is the *governing* part, wherein their Authority is to be exercised over their Servants. And wherein, because there must be a mixture of Love to distinguish it from Tyranny, the other part of their Duty, must be

*Provision for their Servants*, even in both their *Provision* Capacities Temporal and Spiritual, for *Body* and *for their* *Soul*. *Provision for their Body* is only indeed what *Bodies.* is expressly covenanted for; the with-holding or *Lev. 19.* abating whereof, is therefore Injustice and Oppression, against which God hath abundantly provided by the most strict and severe Laws. But *Deut. 24.* *Provision for the Souls also of Servants*, is necessarily *14, 15.* imply'd, by virtue of that great Law of Christianity obliging every Man to further the Honour of *Col. 4. 1.* God in the Interest of Religion, as much as in *Jam. 5. 4.* him lies, and for which none have a fairer, either *For their* Opportunity or Advantage than Masters, in *Souls.* respect to their own Servants; to neglect or defraud them whereof is therefore Impiety. This being the tacit Condition upon which God makes us Masters and not Servants, who gives one the Authority, and subjects the other thereto, only that the Advantage should be used to his Glory in the good of Souls. He then that takes himself obliged to provide for the bodily Sufferance of his Servants, that they may live comfortably with him, ought no less to think himself bound to provide for their Spiritual Improvement, that they may also live (which so much more concerns them) religiously together with him.

Hence

Hence it becomes the Duty of Masters to provide for their Servants, as for their Bodies, *Meat, Drink, Washing and Lodging*, (as we say) so for their Souls, sound and wholsom Instruction in the fundamental Principles, and in the careful Practice of the necessary Duties of Religion. This may effectually be done by *Catechising*, by *Reading* the Holy Scriptures and other good Books, (whereof, God be thanked, there is an abundant store among us) by not only allowing them time and opportunity, but earnestly and strictly charging them to retire by themselves, every day, Morning and Evening to solemn and devout *Prayer to God in secret*. And in order hereunto, they should take care that they be furnished with such Forms of Prayer, as are proper and suitable to their Capacities and Conditions respectively; few having Skill enough without such Helps for a right performance thereof. Neither should they only oblige them to pray thus themselves in secret, but also should set up and maintain the constant *Worship of God in their Families* daily (if it may be) Morning and Evening. Which is observed to be so necessary to keep alive and maintain a sense of God and Religion in the Minds of Men, that where it is neglected, a Family in reason can hardly be esteemed Christian, or indeed to profess, as such, any Religion at all. Which Duties as they ought not to be neglected at other times, so are they more peculiarly seasonable on the *Lords-day*, that is wholly devoted to the Purposes and Exercises of Religion and Devotion, more especially in *publick*, where care ought to be had, that Servants never fail to pay their Attendance with their Masters. This being the most leisure time for such Exercise to such Persons, insomuch, that they

who



who neglect this, will hardly find any other time for it. Here God affords the means instituted for begetting and encreasing Vertue, to which he hath promised a more especial Blessing. Here only is the opportunity and advantage of joyning in the publick Prayers of God's Church: Of being instructed by his Ministers in the Doctrine of Salvation and way to Life Eternal: Of being powerfully incited to the Practice of Piety: And finally, of being invited and admitted to the *Lord's Table*, for which, Masters ought to instruct and prepare their Servants, as for the most solemn and beneficial Institution of the Christian Religion. And when the publick Service of the day is over, then is it seasonable to exact an account of what hath been heard, and to pray for and with their Families, and to see that every Member thereof do this likewise by himself in secret: being as carefull to see their Family well employ'd in God's Service on his day, as in their own Concerns on the other days. That this day may be a seasoning of the following Week, and the divine Blessing may be engaged to attend through it, and they with their's may hope at the last day to present themselves with Joy before God's Tribunal, with, *lo, here I am, and all those whom thou hast given me.*

This is the great Duty of every Master of a Family; consisting of so noble and important Exercises; every way well deserving the *Honour* it is entitled to; insomuch, that as Servants cannot do too much for such good Masters, so can no Masters be really good, and do less for their Servants. Let then both the one and the other here learn their *Duty*, and *Practice* it accordingly towards each other; as both being equally Servants to the great Master of the Universe, who hath enjoyn'd them



such behaviour, and will doom them according thereto, and whereon the Tranquillity and Happiness of Families depends, whereof publick Communities also consist, and cannot hope to flourish otherwise, the relations whereof we are now next to consider.

*In a Political State.* *In a Political State, understanding by Father and Mother not only Governours and Magistrates, but all others who have Superiority in any gift or advantage, whether of Grace, Riches, Age, or Knowledge, whereby the title may be merited, and the authority of a Parent represented.*

*Between Governours and their Subjects.* *Governours and Magistrates are to be honoured by their Subjects with all those Duties of Respect. And which they also are bound to merit and recompence with all those Duties of Beneficence, prescribed them by God the Supreme Governour and Father of both the one and the other.*

*The Duty of Subjects.* *The Duties therefore of Subjects towards their Civil Governours here enjoyned, are to Esteem and Reverence their Persons, to obey their Authority, and pray for their Government.*

*Esteem.* *Esteem for the persons of such, is by the Apostle*  
 1 Pet. 2. *joyn'd with the Duty of fearing God, which ob-*  
 17. *ligeth and leadeth to it, both from Command,*  
*and the near Relation and Similitude that is be-*  
 Rom. 13. *tween God and Governours, which are his own*  
 1. *Ordinance. This we are obliged to do in our*

*thoughts, by entertaining an awful respect for*  
*that Majesty wherewith they are invested, and*  
*resemble the supreme Sovereign of the World, by*  
 Pro. 8. 15. *whom and for whom Kings reign. In our Speech,*  
 Jude 8. *forbearing and fearing to speak Evil of Dignities ;*  
*whose Actions and Counsels, as they are above*  
*us, so belong they only to God, who alone can*  
*see and distinguish the merit of their Faults to*  
 judge

judge truly concerning them: And in our Actions Mat. 22.  
*rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's*, by 21.  
all ways and means in our power contributing to  
help toward the maintenance of the Government,  
the benefit whereof we share in.

Obedience thereto is God's own Institution; ex-  
tending to every Soul, even in every cause; the Obedience.  
powers that are being ordained of God, and ruling by  
his Commission and Authority. And therefore Rom. 13.  
neither the Bishop of Rome, nor the Majority of <sup>1.</sup>  
the People can claim exemption from the Duty of  
Subjection, without arrogating to themselves an  
Authority superiour to God's, that hath subjected  
every Man, without exception, hereto. Neither  
can there be any cause whatsoever, that can su-  
persede our duty herein; since lawful Commands  
are to be obeyed by performance, and unlaw-  
full ones by sufferance. Duty being commanded  
by our Governours, becomes doubly obligatory;  
and whatever is commanded by them, if not  
before a Sin, becomes thereby a Duty; of which  
a submission to Penalty, without very great and  
pressing reasons, and almost a necessity, is no ful-  
filling of it, because defective of that conformity  
which is principally intended thereby. Yea,  
though the legality of a Command be doubted,  
yet till we can be fully resolved, it seems most  
reasonable to take that part of the doubt which  
the Magistrate commands, as being the safest  
and most satisfactory to Conscience, his Authority  
preponderating with us, to make that our undoubt-  
ed Duty, which was before but a doubted and  
suspected Sin. Whereof if we cannot be resolved  
at all, it will become us, rather than disobey, to  
rely wholly on the Judgment of our Superiours;  
following an Authority of God's own appoint-  
ment;

ment, in our ready compliance therewith; where-  
 in we shall be sure to be clear from guilt, if not  
 from mistake. But against the Command of God,  
 as no power is to be actively obeyed, so in a real  
 defence of the Laws of our own Land, it cannot  
 be the Government, *or the Powers that are given us*  
*of God, as his Ordinance,* but a Foreign Power that  
 is inconsistent with our own Government, and  
 would usurp thereupon by its ruin and destruc-  
 tion, that is *resisted*. So that it is the nature of the  
 Government, in this case, that must determine  
 the extent of the Subjects *Obedience*; whereby the  
 Duty of *Non-resistance* is no more the same, than  
 the Supreme Authority is so in all Governments.  
 Where though the command of that we live un-  
 der, is doubtless to be submitted to by us, either in  
 Precept or Penalty; yet is this no obligation to  
 submit in either respect to Commands that are  
 not consistent with our own Government, no more  
 than the Subjects of one Prince owe Allegiance to  
 the Authority of another Prince. And yet doubt-  
 less herein great wariness and caution is abso-  
 lutely requisite in pronouncing against the Judg-  
 ment and Determinations of those with whom  
 the Government is entrusted.

*Prayer.*

1. Tim. 2.

1.

But earnest *Prayer* for such, is both what is ex-  
 pressly commanded, and what is but great chari-  
 ty to them who need and deserve so much from  
 us; and Charity to our selves whose welfare is  
 wrapt up in their Prosperity; and less than which  
 being what we are obliged to for all Men, we  
 cannot do in *Honour* towards those that are above  
 all Men.

*The duty  
 of Gover-  
 nours.*

*The Duty of Governours towards their Subjects,*  
 in return hereto, and Obedience to God by vertue  
 of this Precept, as Subjects to him and Fathers to  
 them,



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them, is in general, to exercise their Authority wholly for the Glory of God, and good of their Country, without either rebelling against the one or tyrannizing over the other. And therefore, in particular, it concerns such to provide good subordinate Magistrates; to maintain an exact Distribution of Justice; to establish and defend the true Worship and Service of God; and to appear most exemplary for Piety and Righteousness themselves. And more than this, as I need not, so neither will it become me to prescribe to such.

The other Relation, in a political State, between Superiours and Inferiours, are (as was hinted of such as excell in any other Gift, dignifying them with a paternal Authority over others. For though in a Kingdom, all are equally subject to the Magistracy that presides over it, and are as Brethren to one another in respect to the Head that is the common Father of the whole: yet in respect to themselves there is a Superiority and Inferiority between them, that advances the one to a paternal Authority, and depresses the other to a filial Subjection; as they stand in a nearer or further distance to a supreme power, that is the Father of all Mankind, or to that which is his Representative, and is the Father of his Country. Whence such also as excell in Grace, Riches, Age or Knowledge, as they are thereby advanced above the common rank of their Fellow-Creatures, become invested with a real Superiority, that justly entitles them to be honoured as Fathers by their Inferiours in respect thereto.

*Between Superiours and Inferiours.*

Such therefore as excel in Grace and vertuous Dispositions, (distinguishing from, and exalting them above the rest of Men, by how much they stand nearer in resemblance to God himself, than whom

*Excelling in Grace.*



none are more a *Father* to them, because none more like to God that is so) as they are to be honoured with the *Love* and *Imitation* of all ; so must they out of a grateful sense of what God hath done more for them than for others, compassionate and help what and where they may, by friendly Re-proof, wholesome Instruction, and importunate Prayer ; to reduce and assist others to advance towards, and accompany them in the Way of Salvation.

Riches.

*The Rich and Honourable in the World*, as the Favourites of Providence, ought to be acknowledged by their Inferiours with due respect to the Station God hath placed them in ; not only without Envy or Grudging, but with Complacency and Thankfulness to God, their Benefactor, for them.

Rom. 12.  
15.

According to that of the Apostle, *rejoycing with them that do rejoyce* ; and by taking great satisfaction, sharing in their Enjoyments, as one Member uses to do in the Health which another does immediately enjoy ; endeavouring to continue and promote to them their Prosperity with divine Providence ; especially by Prayers, recommending such often to God for a sanctified use of their Abundance, that they may be the better, and be instrumental of more good to the Advancement of God's Glory for what they have. In return to which *Honour*, such are bound to communicate of their Abundance with Compassion and Condescension, to the Wants of of their Inferiours ; whose Almoners God hath made them, and wherein, as Parents, they will Imitate their *Father in Heaven*, who though the highest, yet neglects not to be kind and compassionate to the very lowest of his Creatures.

*Age* also is confessedly reverend and awful, having by general consent obtained the title of *Father*; whom the *Apostle* hath therefore commanded to be treated as such; and towards whom respect is not only a point of Manners, but part of a moral Duty; grounded on some resemblance of God, who is stiled the *Ancient of Days*; attended with Wisdom, Experience and Vertue; or at least with the token of Divine Approbation or Compassion in forbearance. For which God himself hath determin'd it reasonable to give that positive Command in the behalf of such, *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear God.* And of *Elihu* it is accordingly observed in *Job*, that he waited till *Job* had spoken, because they were elder than he; confessing of himself, *I am young, and ye very old, wherefore I was afraid, I durst not shew you mine opinion.* But then because this *Honour* that is due to the *Elder*, is founded upon the presumption of their Vertue and Wisdom, therefore are such hence obliged to give sufficient proof hereof to the Younger in their behaviour, by reverencing themselves, and by grave, and prudent, and holy actions to put a *Crown of Glory* upon their own grey heads, the sparkling whereof may at once allure and guide into the Paths of Righteousness; and be able by their fatherly Experience and Care to moderate the madness of the *Age* they live in, and become both the Ornament and Blessing of it.

In fine, *Knowledge and intellectual Endowments*, are the growth and improvement of the Soul, that exalts the Man above his Neighbours, and capacitates for fatherly Counsel and Instruction; which as the more *Ignorant* ought to seek and submit to, without either Malignity or Detraction;

so the wise ought chearfully to communicate and render useful, without Scorn or Ostentation. And such is the import of this Precept in a political Sense.

*In the Ecclesiastical State.*

Lastly, *In an Ecclesiastical State*, we are to understand by our *Fathers* to be honoured, the *Ministerial Office*; whereon is grounded a paternal relation between *Pastors* and their *Flocks*, *Ministers* and their *People*, falling also under the direction of this Commandment.

*Between Ministers and their People.*

Heb. 5.4.

To constitute a man a legal *Minister of Jesus Christ*, there must be a due Call and legal Separation to the sacred Function, into which the temerarious thrusting of a Man's self, is no sufficient ground of either the relation or honour belonging to it. *For no man*, saith the *Apostle*, *taketh this Honour to himself, but he that is called of God*. For thus God calleth every man he points out to be designed by him hereto; either *inwardly*, by the gifts of his Holy Spirit enlightning their Minds, with a competent measure of Learning and Knowledge, or sanctifying their Hearts with vertuous and devout Inclinations to use it for God's glory; or *outwardly*, by a solemn Separation to this work, through the Imposition of hands, which alone gives the ministerial Power, and invests with Authority to dispense the Ordinances of *Jesus Christ*, as an Officer and Minister of the *Gospel*.

That an *Honour* is due to these persons, is often and plainly express'd in the Scriptures. And that a peculiar *Honour* is their due from the People, particularly under their Ministerial Charge, is reasonable from the ground of their paternal Relation arising from the better part, and designing the more important and noble interest of Man.

To



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25

To whom therefore from their People is indispensibly due, the highest and most sincere *Esteem*, <sup>The Duty of the People.</sup> and *Love*, and *Maintenance*, and *Obedience*, whether to their *Government* to submit to their Rule, to receive their Decrees, and undergo their just and Pious Censures with true Penitence and resolved Reformation; or to their *Doctrine* to attend, entertain, and improve by it; or to their good *Example*, to imitate it readily and perseveringly, *Following their Faith*, as the *Apostle* exhorts, *considering the End of their Conversation*; to which, Heb. 13. 7. upon the Account of both Interest and Duty, ought never to be wanting assiduous *Prayer* for Ability and Success to their Labours; which the infirmities of Nature, the difficulties of the Calling, and the Importance of Success therein necessitates. And did all make more Conscience of praying rightly for their Ministers, there would be little doubt, but as there would be better Ministers, so would their Success be more visible. Instead therefore of railing against their Persons, or Grudging their Maintenance, and frustrating their Endeavours, turn your Passions into Prayers for them. Beseeching God (whose the Clergy are, and from whom every Good and perfect Gift doth come) that he would give them Abilities suitable to the weight of their Employment, and Grace and Tendernefs proportionable to their Abilities. That he would incline the Governours of his Church to lay hands upon such and only such as are capacitated with Paternal Endowments to give Food to their Children in due Measure and season, rightly dividing the Word. That he would inspire all in Holy Orders with holy Affections, and a sanctified Understanding, whereby they may be both able and willing to go before their People,



ple, to lead them by their Example as well as Doctrine, and shew them how to live virtuously, as well as instruct them what it is to do so. And finally, that God would crown all their pious Endeavours with success, and Seal the Ministry by plentiful Conversions to his own Glory, and the mutual Comfort of both the Minister and his People.

*The Duty  
of Mini-  
sters.*

Heb. 15.

17.

2 Tim. 2.

24, 25.

2 Cor. 12.

15.

11. 12.

Tit. 1. 7.

8.

In return for this to them, he is obliged in Spirituals so to order his Government, Doctrine and Conversation, as may answer and express a paternal Care and Concern: exercising his power to Rule (according to the Subordination of his Station in the Church) with great Humility, Candour, Moderation and Courage; not lording it over God's Heritage, so as herein to be imperious, to domineer, to oppress and disturb the Churches quiet; but, as the Apostle prescribes, being gentle unto all men,-----In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledgment of the Truth: dispensing his Doctrine with sound Knowledge and Understanding, with Profit to Edification, with Diligence, as being willing to spend and be spent, and with faithful Impartiality, neither sparing Sin, nor concealing Duty: And especially ordering his Conversation after the most exemplary manner; with great Prudence, to cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; with universal Respect and Candour, without Pride or Passion, being compassionate, affable, officious and taking all opportunities of doing good to every one; and with severe Holiness and Righteousness, appearing blameless as the Stewards of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to Wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men,

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*men, sober, just, holy, temperate.* Even every thing that a Christian ought to be; and every thing that he presseth others to be: without which a Minister's Authority and Doctrine will signifie just nothing. Neither ought he to be behind hand with his People in Prayer, who as they are to pray for him, so is he to pray for them; striving not only with them, but with God for them; from whom alone all increase is to be expected, and without whom nothing can be hoped for from any thing that can be done by man.

The import of this comprehensive Command being explain'd, a Word must be added concerning,

II. *The Promise annexed; viz. That thy Days may be long upon the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* A right Understanding whereof will occasion three Inquiries.

1. What that *Land* is, whereto God seems here to have confined this Promise.

2. What the Blessing is that is promised in that Land. And,

3. To whom, and in what Measure it is made good to the Observers of this Commandment. Of which as briefly as may be, inquire we,

1. *What Land it is whereto God seems here to have confined this Promise.* Which in a literal promised Sense, being addressed to the Israelites in their unsettled Condition in the Wilderness, traveling toward a Land God had promised to give them, it can be no other than this *promised Land*, as to them, that is here referred to, wherein they were to take up their Rest and Settlement, and might expect to maintain long or short Possession of it, just as they were obedient or disobedient to God's Laws

Laws. And what *Canaan* was to the *Jews*, that is every Peoples own Country to them, who are as much concerned in the Blessing as in the Duty; and therefore, though it is not every ones lot to live upon the Land of *Canaan*, which is literally referred to, in this Precept, yet it is every ones Right by Vertue of his Obedience to be blessed in like Manner, upon whatever Land the Providence of God may cast them. The Blessings of God being not confined to any one Place or People, but

Acts 10.  
35.

*in every Nation, he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness is accepted with him.* And whereas in a typical Sense, the Land of *Canaan*, under the legal State shadowed out Heaven, which is no less the promised Land of Rest under the Evangelical; and wherein therefore the Conversation or Citizenship is said to be, so is this now principally the Land which God proposes for the Reward of Obedience, and is what the Lord our God giveth. In Respect to which, this where we yet are, is but a Wilderness we are exil'd in, and wandering through, thither, *Godliness having the Promise*, as we have taught, both of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come. Therefore inquire we further,

1 Tim. 4.  
8.

The Blessing  
sing  
thereof.

2. What the Blessing is, that is promised in this Land; expressed, that thy Days may be long. Which is observed to imply not only Length but Comfort in Days, Length adding but to the Misery of those Days which are destitute of Comfort. And therefore in this World, Obedience to this Precept is designed to entitle to long and happy days, and to secure not only the Possession but Enjoyment of earthly Blessings. Which, tho' assign'd to the diligent Observers of other Duties, yet is it with great Congruity appropriated to the Obser-

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vers of this Command ; it seeming most just and reasonable that they who *honour their Father and Mother*, and are gratefull to those from whom, in Subordination to God, they received Life and Welfare, should by God's Dispensation enjoy that Life and Welfare long ; and that they who dishonour or neglect the Authors of their Life, should soon be deprived of it or of its Comforts. And in the next World, upon Obedience to this as to all other Divine Commands, is proposed an everlasting Life of Happiness. So that to live well here, and to be for ever happy hereafter, is our encouragement to live in a conscientious Discharge of all relative Duties by *honouring our Father and Mother*. The only remaining Enquiry is,

3. Lastly, *To whom, and in what measure this Promise is made good, to the observers of this Commandment.* For the Commandment may be considered, as address'd either to a collective Body or whole Nation of Men, or applicable to every particular Member of such Body distinct. *In the former Notion*, as we are to understand a Nation in general, obliged to the observance of the Relative Duties between Superiors and Inferiors ; so there needs little proof of the tendency hereof to the preservation and continuance of such in their own Lands with Glory and Prosperity. Nothing makes a people more to thrive and endure than a due Vindication of the *Honour* this Command enforces in the several Relations concerned therein. This influences the several Relations a Kingdom is made up of, and makes (from the very Nature and Force of the thing it self, as well as from the Justice and Blessing of Providence ordinarily attending) its downfall morally impossible ; while its Oeconomical, Political, and Ecclesiastical

*To whom  
and in  
what mea-  
sure  
given.*



clefiastical Parts are kept hereby orderly and united. And therefore there is no Command more immediately affecting the publick than this ; by a due observance whereof all Nations have arriv'd to the height of their Prosperity, and sunk from it, only as it hath decayed. So that in this Sense, (and which some incline to suppose to be here its Primary one) the Promise here annexed is unexceptionably made good to all. And as the *Israelites* continuing the Name of a Nation in the Land of *Canaan*, depended upon their Observance of this Command, so is every Nation no less concerned herein to stand or fall, and to endure or have an end according to their Observation of the Duties hereby enjoyned. And in the *Latter Notion*, though the Promise in its *Literal Sense* is not so unexceptionable and unlimited, being applied to every particular Man individually, yet is it annexed as a Promise that may be depended on to be made good so far as may conduce to its Completion, in a *Spiritual Sense*, to promote the promised Reward of Eternal Happiness, that infinitely more concerns us than this Earthly Blessing doth. So that the Obedient may confidently challenge long Life and prosperous Days, when all Circumstances concur towards Everlasting Welfare ; such having, 'tis certain, the fairest Claim thereto, not only from the Virtue of this Promise, but also from the Kindness and Intercessions of those they honour, and the concurring Blessing of God upon Vertue. Otherwise, such Promise would become a Threat, and what is apprehended a Blessing, would indeed prove no other than a Snare and Curse. And therefore, God who knows how frail and yielding the best of us are ; and in the Series of his Divine

Provi-

Providence, sees what prevailing Temptations we shall be exposed to, doth oftentimes in Mercy *take good Men from the Evil to come*, by abridging *Isa. 57. 1.* this his Promise, to prevent Sin and Trouble; and to secure the greater Reward, will not suffer foolish Man to sit down with this, which is the least. Which is not yet unfaithfulness in God to this his Promise, since to make it then good, would be to hurt, and his inviolable insisting thereon would make his faithfulness nothing but an Act to circumvent and undo his Creatures. Neither can any Man in his right Wits be willing to compound for the Continuance of this present Life, with the Hazard and Diminution of his future Happiness.

This then is the Encouragement designed the Obedient by this Promise annexed to this Command: That their due Observance hereof is the only Means to secure the Establishment and Prosperity of their Country; and a very probable Means to make their own Fortunes therein, if God see it good: But a certain Means to preserve to them the Conscience of their own Goodness in this World, and the bright Expectation of a Reward in the other World; which will support and make any Days happy and long enough upon whatsoever Land they shall be cast to spend them; and is a Blessing that as no Violence of Man can obstruct, so hath God without any Exceptions obliged himself to bestow.

*For which God, of his Infinite Mercy, capacitate us, by his Grace of Obedience to this and all his other Commandments, for the sake of Jesus Christ! Amen.*

# S E R M O N XXVII.

## O N T H E

### Sixth Commandment.

Exod. xx. 13.

*Thou shalt not kill.*

**A**S of all Human Enjoyments Life is dearest, and what also we first receive of all other from our Parents whom the foregoing Command obliged us to Honour; so hath God in Mercy to us provided for its security, in this First of those Precepts, that directs our Charity towards Man considered absolutely, immediately after that which respected him relatively by prohibiting Murder. To state the Nature of which Sin, and to explain the Ground and Reason of this Prohibition of it, as it will be the Argument of this Discourse, so is it all that will be needful to be said for the Understanding the full Import of this Commandment. Consider we then,

I. *The Nature of the Prohibition here enacted; wherein may be distinguished these three Particulars;*

culars. 1. The *Person* spoken to, to whom it will be accounted Murder to *kill*; [*Thou.*] 2. The *Act* prohibited; even *killing* that comes under the Guilt of Murder. And, 3. The *Object* of this Act prohibited, which though not express'd must necessarily be supposed in the Commandment, being the Persons whom such are *not to kill* to avoid the Guilt of Murder. All which will require a distinct Consideration in order to state truly the Nature of the Sin here forbidden. And therefore begin we with the First, and inquire concerning,

1. *The Person concern'd in the Prohibition*, that so we may know to whom it will be accounted Murder to *kill*. For that there are some Persons and in some Circumstances, whose killing another is no Murder, is apparent. And whom therefore, as such, we must except from the indefinite force of this Law. And therefore [*Thou*] *shalt not kill* seems necessarily to be restrain'd by these four Exceptions. 1. *The Execution of Justice*. 2. *The Prosecution of War*. 3. *The necessary Defence of a Man's own Person*. And 4. *The undesigned Accidents* that may involve the most innocent. In all which instances there may confessedly be *killing* without the Sin of Murder, wherein Persons are not therefore concerned in this Prohibition. For,

1. *To kill in Execution of Justice is not Murder*; because all Blood so shed is by God's own Commission, who hath the sole Power over the Life of Man, which he may take away at his own pleasure, by what Way or Means he shall think fit, whether immediately himself, or by any other whom he appoints to execute his Will, in his Name and Behalf. And therefore the Word *Thou*,  
D must

*None  
must kill  
except in*

*Execution  
of Justice.*



- must be resolved to signifie Man without such Power, of himself uncommissioned by God, who
- Rom. 13. *shall not kill.* For, being commission'd, he is *God's*  
 4. *Minister, a Revenger to excute Wrath upon him that doth evil. A Governour sent by God for the Punishment of evil Doers,* the Preservation of Men's Peace and Lives, and to prevent Murder; who, when Justice requires, is obliged to kill, and would be guilty of Murder then to spare; whose *Eye*
- 1 Pet. 2. *shall not therefore pity, but Life shall go for Life;* since  
 14. it is enacted, that *He that sheds Man's Blood by*
- Deut. 12. *Man shall his Blood be shed.*  
 21. *Man shall his Blood be shed.*
- Gen. 9.6. *Man shall his Blood be shed.*
- In War. 2. *To kill also in the Prosecution of War is not Murder:* Because it is the only Means of deciding Differences, and vindicating Wrongs between different Nations for the Maintenance of Peace and Justice, which it is the Sovereign's Duty faithfully to defend. Upon which Account necessity hath reconciled it to our most peaceable Religion; and God hath stiled Himself *the Lord of Hosts*, and given us Examples of good Men engaged, even at his own Command, in a Military Employment, and hath not offered one Instance of dislike to condemn it; as to be sure, had it been unlawful, would have been given either by *S. John Baptist*, when he instructed, or by *S. Peter*, when he preached to, or by our *Saviour* when he commended the Faith of, a Soldier. And therefore Blood spilt in a just War, is shed, as in the aforesaid Case of executing Justice, by Commission from God; wherein therefore every Soldier is his Minister, who not out of any private Revenge, but in Defence of his Country from Destruction, and at the Command of his Prince, is obliged to hazard his own Life to take away that of his Enemies, that will not permit to him his Right of Safety.
3. To

3. *To kill, further, in the necessary Defence of a Man's own private Person, is not, in like manner, Murder.* For, God, who gave us Life and a natural Love to it, with Means and Command to preserve it, may well be supposed herewith to have imparted a Right to every Man to defend the same against unjust, extream and inevitable Violence upon it. Because otherwise more Encouragement would be given to unbounded Violence, than could be consistent with the Peace and Advantage of Human Society. For, though the Law hath provided Punishments against such Violences, whereto Men ought to repair for Remedy where they can; yet where they cannot do this, they must either betake themselves to Self-defence, or else neglect a Means that was in their Power to save their Lives. And therefore, when there is no possibility of having recourse to a Magistrate for Protection, every Man is a Magistrate to himself, and is so commissioned to be by the Supreme Power, that otherwise is to be his Protection. The Law impowers private Persons to slay the Invader, where there is no other Means to secure themselves; because in such Case it is not Murder, but the prevention of Murder that is designed; and not the Violation, but Execution of the Law that is prosecuted, and consequently no other than what both God and Man allow and will acquit.

4. *Lastly, To kill by meer Accident, without any By Accident or Purpose of doing it, is not Murder:* Because nothing hath the Nature of a Sin which is not some way voluntary in him who is the Committer of it. For because he could no way help his doing of it, therefore is he no way chargeable with the Fact, which is not properly his, having  
D 2
been

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Deut. 19. 5. been only executed by an over-ruling Providence that made him the innocent Instrument thereof. In whom therefore God excuseth such Murder from Divine Punishment ; and to secure it from Human Vengeance, provided Cities of Refuge for such Murtherers protection.

And therefore it is not, we see, every one that killeth another who is justly chargeable with a Violation of this Precept, or concern'd in the Prohibition. For, some Men are commission'd, some allowed, some forced, and some unavoidably allotted to kill another, and therefore such are necessarily excepted : And it is only *Thou shalt not kill* (not whosoever, or in whatsoever Circumstances thou art ; but only *Thou*) who art no Magistrate nor legally commissioned thereto ; *Thou*, who art no way engaged in War as a Soldier, *Thou*, who dost it not in thy own necessary Defence ; And thou, who may'st help it if thou wilt, *shalt not kill*. Neither are even such Persons suffered to kill in any other Instances, but only as such. Therefore consider we,

*What killing is Murder.*

2. *The Act prohibited*, that so we may distinguish what that *killing* is that will be hereby accounted Murder. For though the Propriety of the Word limiteth its Sense, yet the intent of the Prohibition extendeth the Sin to Variety of Degrees and Kinds thereof. Insomuch that to *kill*, though it literally imports no more than an unjust Deprivation of this Temporal Life, yet the forbidding this, extends also to restrain all manner of sinful Actions, that may any way conduce in any Degree thereof. And this Sin of killing a Man may become guilty of, by violation of this Commandment, either *Negatively*, by not preserving Life when he can, or *Positively*,

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tively, by destroying Life when he may preserve it.

1. *Negatively, to kill*, is when we deny to give *Not pro-* or do something, being in our Power and our *serving of* Duty, without which, Life cannot subsist, or prob- *Life.* ably continue. And this is the affirmative Part of this Precept implied in its Negative; the neglect whereof equally contracts the Sin of breaking it; it arguing a Murtherous Disposition towards our Neighbour, and is, in reasonable esteem, and in God's sight a killing of him. For not to preserve Life, is to take it way, and the Command that prohibits this, obligeth to that. Wherefore we are hereby not only forbid to kill, but engaged to all lawful Endeavours and Means to preserve Life, by the Exercise of Humanity, Charity and Mercy to all that are Necessitous and in Distress, according to our Abilities and Opportunities, that none through want of our Good-will, may in any Degree suffer in his Life; which is to take it from him, so far as we deny him its comfortable Continuance. *If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto Death, and those that are ready to be slain: If thou sayest, behold we knew it not; Doth not he that pondereth the Heart, consider it? And he that keepeth thy Soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every Man according to his Works?* Prov. 24. 11, 12. Negligent Omissions about so important a Concern as Life, incur the Guilt of Commissions, and not to do our utmost to preserve such a Blessing, is but justly interpreted the Destruction of it. But,

2. *Positively, to kill*, is when we do that which *Destroy-* is destructive to Life; and not only deny it *Com-ing of* fort, but offer it Violence. The which one may *Life.* be guilty of several ways, and in several Degrees,



according to the Powers and Faculties engaged therein. For,

*In Heart.* 1. *There is a Murder of the Heart*: Where all Sin takes its rise, and where Guilt is contracted, though it proceed no further. And therefore *thou shalt not kill* even in thy Heart; which, Envy, Hatred, Malice, Wrath, Revenge, evil Designs and Desires do there commit. And accordingly St. *John* tells us, that *whosoever hateth his Brother, is a Murderer*. And so our Saviour in his Comment on this Commandment, interprets the same of all sinful Anger. For, these things, as they commonly do produce the Act of Murder, so they argue an inclination thereto, which, if Fear and Self-respect did not restrain, would produce it, and consequently in Moral Account, which regardeth not so much the Act as the Will, are of the same Quality therewith, and fall under the Cognizance of Divine, however unregarded by human Laws, seeing no further than the outward Act. And so also,

*By Tongue.* 2. *There is a Murder of the Tongue*. The *Psalmist* tells us of Words that were *softer than Oyl*, yet *were they Drawn swords*; and of Men accordingly, *who whet their Tongue like a Sword, and bend their Bows to shoot their Arrows, even bitter Words*. As also the Prophet *Ezekiel* speaks of Men that *carry Tales to shed Blood*. Not the keenest Weapon in the most revengeful Hand proving more destructive, than many times the Extravagances of a lawless Tongue. And therefore also *Thou shalt not kill* with thy Words, by uttering harsh and passionate Language, deadly Curfes and Imprecations, treacherous Whisperings and false Slanders, cruel Threats or immodest Reproaches, opprobrious Revilings or spiteful Contumelies, which

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which disturb Peace, and destroy the Comfort of Life and oft cut and wound the Heart, killing with Grief, and naturally tending and *leading down to the Chambers of Death.* And therefore a reviling Word is by our Saviour, in the aforesaid Comment, not only interpreted but condemned as Murder, *He that but calleth his Brother fool,* being denounced to be *in Danger of Hell-Fire.* But,

3. *There is a Murder of the Hand,* which com- *By the*  
pleats the Sin in Action, whether Partially or *Hand.*  
Totally.

*A Partial Killing with the Hand,* though it doth *Partially.*  
no more than strike, or hurt, or wound, or maim,  
yet comes it within the Guilt of the Sin here forbid,  
inasmuch as it tendeth towards a Deprivation of Life  
by hazarding its Loss, and taking away its Perfection,  
which is contrary to that Love and Tenderneſs which  
the affirmative Part of this Commandment, as was hinted,  
doth oblige us to have for the Persons of Men. And  
therefore it is well observed that God, who in this Precept,  
forbids only to *kill*, ſtrictly and literally under- *Exod. 21.*  
ſtood, doth in the very next Chapter, forbid the *24, &c.*  
doing of ſuch leſſer Miſchiefs as Appendages here-  
of, and in that appoints their Punishment.

*A Total killing,* which no Body doubts to eſteem, *Total.*  
when it is unjuſt, as Murder, is when a perfect  
Separation is made of Soul and Body, whereby  
this mortal Life is ended, and irrecoverably loſt:  
This being the utmoſt import of the Word in its  
very Letter; and no Man can be killed more than  
this amounts to: Whereof one may become guilty,  
either Directly or Indirectly.

*Direct actual Murder* is, when a Man doth vo- *Directly,*  
luntarily in a violent illegal Manner take away  
Life immediately himſelf by whatever Means:

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Which is the grossest Act of this Sin, and leaves no Body to doubt where to fasten the Guilt of it, whereof all men are conscious and aware upon its very Commission.

*Indirectly.* *Indirect Murder* a Man may be guilty of, within the Breach of this Commandment, though he doth not imbrue his own hands in Blood, by being accessary thereto. Whether by *counselling or commanding* it to be done, whereby *David* became guilty of killing *Uriah*. By *consenting to the Fact*, for which reason *Pilate* is reckoned among the Murderers of the Lord of Life. By *Assisting, plotting, or any other way helping towards the doing of it*, whereby the Chief Rulers among the Jews, are said to have Crucified him, whom only the Soldiers did really execute. By *perswading or urging to any thing that will apparently occasion it*. Whereby they bring the Guilt of Murder upon themselves. Who wilfully provoke and stir up others to such Degrees of Passion and Revenge, or kindle, and increase Variance and Contention which produceth it. As they do no less, who draw away others to commit that which apparently tends to the shortning of Life; which is little considered by too many who make it their delight or kindness to make others drunk or debauch'd, which so often ends in some lingring Disease, or fatal Accident, that occasioneth the Destruction of Life from their Hands. A man also is reckoned Accessary to a Murder by *concealing or not inquiring after the Discovery of it* what he can, and finally by *not punishing or conniving at and pardoning the Fact when known*. Which is a Sin peculiar to those in Authority, whereby they bring Guilt not only on their own Heads, but Pollution on a whole Land, and liableness to God's Vengeance for it

So

Deut. 17.  
6, 7.  
1 Kings  
21. 19.  
Num. 35.  
31, 56.

So various are the ways of committing this heinous Crime prohibited in this Commandment, and such is the killing hereby accounted Murder. To comprehend the Nature whereof yet further, we are also to consider,

3. Lastly, *The Subject of this Act prohibited: Whom we* Which though not expressed, must necessarily be *must not* supposed in the Commandment; even him whom *kill.* we are not thus to kill, that so we may avoid the Guilt of Murder. The which being a Duty of the second Table relating between Man and Man, restraineth its Subject to only human Nature; obliging us to understand it in this threefold Sense. 1. Thou shalt not kill a Man. No not, 2. Thy self. Nor, 3. Any other of thy kind, that is like thee.

1. *Thou shalt not kill a Man.* In opposition to *Not a* that ancient Heresie of the *Manichees*, yet retained *man.* to this Day among some of the *Indians*, extending the Sense of this Prohibition even to every thing in which there is Life. And therefore, as some report the matter, they would not pull a Branch from a growing Tree, because forsooth, there was Life in it. And, as all agree, they held it unlawful to kill any Animal. Nor would they suffer the slaying of any Beast for the use and service of Man's Life. Which is expressly contrary to that Grant given to Man from God, the universal Lord of all living Creatures, to have the power of Life and Death over *every moving thing that liveth*, to convert it to *be meat for himself.* Though, indeed, as *Gen. 9. 3.* all Acts of Cruelty are reduceable to this Prohibition, so unmercifulness towards any Creature, in cruelly tormenting of them, only for the Gratification of any unreasonable Passion, tending to harden the Heart, and to abate of that humanity and



and natural tenderneſs that God hath implanted in us to reſtrain from this Sin, this may very probably be hereby forbidden. And yet there is no doubt but we may put them to any kind of Death, that the neceſſity either of our Food or Phyſick will require. And therefore the killing here forbidden refers only unto Man, and is very properly diſtinguiſh'd by the name of Murder. And therefore further,

*Not ones  
ſelf.*

2. *Thou ſhalt not kill, no not thy ſelf.* The Command being indefinite, he that kills himſelf, doth certainly kill; and he that ſheds his own blood, ſheds the blood of Man. And though this, and the following Precepts are confeſſedly to be underſtood with relation to our Neighbour, yet in aſmuch as we are to receive the meaſure of dealing with our Neighbour, from that treatment we owe to our ſelves, if we are not to kill our Neighbour, much leſs are we to kill our ſelves, the Love whereof is the meaſure of Love to the other; and the Command that forbids one, neceſſarily by conſequence forbids the other. Which though an Act, compoſed Nature deteſts and ſtartles at, yet is it too often betray'd and over-powered to commit, incurring its Guilt more ways than one. For a Man may *kill himſelf*, either by his *own hands* or by thoſe of others.

*By our  
own  
hands.*

*By his own hands* he may become guilty of *Self-murder*, either Directly or Indirectly.

*Directly*, when he upon whatever Pretence, lays violent hands upon himſelf; of his own accord aſſuming Authority to diſpoſe of his own Life, which is the Prerogative of God reſerved to himſelf and his Vicegerents by Commiſſion from him.

*In-*

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*Indirectly*, when through neglect or indiscretion he doth voluntarily run himself upon, or indulge himself in such Actions, as evidently tend to the shortning of his Life.

Such are the Neglect of a due care of Health, the exposing ones self to unnecessary Dangers, indulging to Intemperance and the like. All which instances, though they be not directly and immediately Self-murder; yet may they be accounted such, mediately and indirectly, because they are Dispositions thereto, and consequently to be conceived to be forbidden with the other; he who forbids any Action, at least, if with any Severity, being in reason to be understood to forbid that which hath a natural tendency to it; because where this is not carefully avoided, it will be difficult, if not impossible to avoid that.

And though, again, these things do not so instantly inflict Death upon a Man's self by his own hands; yet Death being the natural consequent of them, it matters not much as to the Crime of *Self-Murder*, whether it happen sooner or later; he being no less a Murderer that gives a slow Poison, than he that dispatches by a sudden Stab.

Yea, and though finally, such instances for the most part are look'd upon as an unhappy Imprudence, rather than a violation of a Divine Law, yet is it because Men consider not that there is a Duty owing by them to themselves of *Self-preservation*, which God exacts in obedience to himself. And therefore, he that any way wilfully occasions the shortning of his own Life, becomes guilty either directly or indirectly of thus killing himself by his own hands.

*By the hands of another* a Man may also, as was *By* and said, become guilty of *Self-murder*. And that is, *thers* when *band*.

when another is the instrument of his Death, by his own sinful Procurement.

In which Respect, those *who die by the hand of Justice*, may be accounted *Self-murderers*, inasmuch as they occasion such their own Death, by a voluntary Commission of those Villainies which they could not but know were Capital and would incur it. Whereby Malefactors bring upon themselves, not only the Guilt of the Sin they die for, but of even the Death they suffer for it. In the same respect, those also *who necessitate another in his own defence to take away their Lives*, are no less *Self-murderers*. For, such being the Assailants do necessitate the assaulted to stand upon their own Defence; whereby, whoever is killed, the Assailant is the only Murderer. If he kills, he murders his Neighbour; if he is killed, he murdereth himself by his Neighbour's hand, who did it only in his own Defence, from the Guilt whereof the Law both of God and Man acquits him, and allows it for his own Preservation, which is his Duty. And so finally, in this respect, those *who are killed in a Duel* justly incur the Guilt of Self-murder. Because a formal Challenge being supposed to be accepted on both sides, equally putting their Lives upon an apparent hazard, necessarily makes both Murtherers, the one of his Antagonist, the other of himself by the hands of his Antagonist, so that they either living or dying by such Challenge, the guilt of the Sin here prohibited is both designed and incur'd by them. Which surely is a greater Argument against Dueling, than any that can be drawn from the Topick of pretended *Honour* or *Courage* for it. Pretended, I say, because it is no true *Courage* to disdain the fear of dying of any Fashion; which is an Action of the greatest moment,

ment, on which so much depends, which can be but once done, and which if it be not well done, lets into everlasting Ruin. Nor can it be any *Honour* for a Christian to Apostatize from his Profession, by violating the Meekness and peaceable Temper of Christianity, which are his greatest real *Ornaments*, and in the sight of God, of great price, especially upon the base accounts of *Drinking, Gaming, or Whoring*, which have notoriously been the original of most Challenges. 1Pet. 3.4.

However, a Man can have no just Pretence to dispose of his own Life at his own Pleasure in any instance, which is so considerable a violation of this Commandment, and offends against God, others and our selves.

*Self-murder* offends against God, as it usurps his *Self-murder* Prerogative, and affronts his Providence. It usurps upon his *Prerogative*, not only as it violates *der an Offence against* his Command, but as it disposes of Life, and determines its Period, which belongs to God only, who is its Creator, to do. And it affronts his *Providence* by the Dissatisfaction it implies, with the present Dispensations of it, or the Distrust and Despair of redress from its future Care or Ability to relieve us. For to separate Soul and Body, is the peculiar work of him that united them, and of them only whom he shall Commission thereto; who having placed us in this Life for his own wise Ends and Purposes, where we, every one of us, are by his appointment, none legally can stir hence without his Call. And tho' our stay may seem never so tedious and grievous, yet all our Sufferings and Troubles coming to us from God, and it being never out of his Power to relieve us under them; it is our indispensable Duty to stand our ground and wait his



his leisure, and neither desert his Service, nor distrust his Clemency, nor blame his Wisdom, to dispose of us better than we would, or can by such desperate Rebellion against him.

*Against  
others.*

*Self-murder also offends against others;* being committed against the very Standard and Rule of Love to them, whom we are to *love as our selves*. And therefore by actually destroying our selves, we do virtually and interpretatively murder all Mankind, having violated the fundamental Law on which their Preservation depends, and by which our Love is to be regulated towards them. Besides that hereby the *Commonwealth* is injured in the loss of a Member; from whose Profit and Service such subtract themselves, if Innocent, and if Criminal, such withdraw themselves from her Justice: And *Relations and private Families*, who stand in need of, and may have deserved better from us, will greatly suffer through unavoidable and almost intolerable Shame and Grief for us. Nor is such Sin *less favourable to our selves*; which violates the very inclination of Nature, whereby every thing desireth to preserve it self, blasts the Reputation, woundeth the Body, dameth the Soul, and hurries a Man out of this World in a Sin there can be no Repentance for, which yet is the only Condition of Mercy; such Death being a Sin, and therefore the last Act of such Life damnable.

*Against  
our selves.*

And yet, notwithstanding all these Aggravations of this Sin; how frequent is its Commission, and how favourably is it judg'd of among us! Even in our days, among those professing Christianity, how many do we hear of in a Year, that have shot or strangled, or poyson'd or drowned themselves, or prodigally cast away *their Lives* in a private Quarrel

Quarrel or Duel? And by some are look'd on as generous and brave in that Action, whereby they shew'd themselves above the fear of Death, or cut short and prevented the Miseries of Life. This was exactly the *Stoicism* of some former Ages commended by Heathens, but ever condemned by Christians. And not without just reason, since nothing can bespeak greater Cowardice than such a fear of present Sufferings as is able to drive Men headlong into Death, and the Hazard of everlasting Ruin. *Valour* and *Fool-hardiness* are in the Opinion of all Men, very distant things, and to which of these *Self-Murder* is referable, may confidently be left to the considerate to determine.

Neither yet is it hereby intended, that we should refuse all that may occasion their own Deaths, our Charity to excuse or mitigate their Guilt of transgressing this Law; but such only (as was at first intimated) who, of their own accord assume Authority to dispose of their own Life, as being the only Self-murderers here charged to be Criminal in any of the foregoing instances. For a Man may in some Sence, occasion his own Death not only *Innocently* but *Necessarily*. As when he unwittingly and undesignedly instead of Food, eateth Poyson; or accidentally woundeth himself to Death, or in Obedience to God, and to avoid Sin, or to render some Christian Grace more exemplary, exposeth himself to such Dangers, from which nothing in all Probability but Death is to be expected. In all which Cases he is not so much the Disposer of his own Life, as Providence and Duty is. Our Notice whereof is here necessary to absolve and distinguish them from the Guilt of Self-murder, whose

whose Duty to their Country, or Love to their Friends, or Charity to the Miserable, or Constancy to Truth hath engaged to lay down their Lives, where the saving of them would have been their Sin to the loss of their Souls: Especially since our *Saviour*, who confessedly *laid down his Life* voluntarily, is propos'd to our Example, and we are called upon to *take up our Cross and follow him*. And yet even in such Case no man is allowed to die by his own Hand, out of Revenge to himself, or weariness of living longer, but only in Submission to his Duty which is God's Call, and his Commission to fear Disobedience more than Death. And thus *Sampson*, who was a Judge in *Israel*, and an inspired Person, we may well suppose, acted not without some special Commission from God, which both directed and enabled him in such a Death. But without some such Commission or Call from Duty, no man hath Power or Liberty to dispose of his own Life, being obliged to wait his appointed time untill God think fit to release him, however he may in the mean time exercise and try him. For the Commandment is, *Thou shalt not kill*, no not thy self, directly or indirectly, by thy own hands or others upon any Pretence whatsoever, of thy own accord, without a Call from God to lay down thy Life in Submission to thy bounden Duty to him; which is the Import of this Prohibition, as it respects our selves for its Subject.

Not our  
Neigh-  
our.

3. But the more direct and immediate Import of its Sence, to compleat further the Command, is, *Thou shalt not kill* another, even thy *Neighbour*, who is the object of all these second Table-Duties, and whom thou art to *Love as thy self*. In respect to whom, a man may become guilty of  
Mur.

Murder these two Ways, viz. By preventing or by depriving of Life.

In the former Way those become Murderers, *By preventing* who endeavour to procure *Abortions*. To kill another that hath Life, and to prevent another from ever having it at all, being otherwise disposed for it, differing only in Circumstance, and therefore called *Homicidii Festinatio*, a Murder before hand, whilst the Essence and Guilt of the Sin appear to be the same: Implying the same Injury done to the Image of God, and the same Damage done to the Commonwealth of Man. And tho' the Party immediately wronged hereby can have no Sence hereof, yet God whose Purpose is thwarted, will resent the Injury for him, as concern'd herein with him; inasmuch as there seems to be more of Malignity in preventing a Mercy from ever being received, than to rob another thereof after some Enjoyment. Besides that the Life of a Man being so sacred a thing, and peculiarly the Prerogative of God to bestow and deprive of it, no mortal can interpose either in the one or other, uncommission'd; without great Insolence and presumption towards his Maker.

In the latter way those become Murderers, who *By depriving of* unjustly deprive of the Life already actually possess'd, whether it be for a long or short time; *Life.* some having been kill'd as soon as born, and others cut short though after never so long a space of Indulgence. And as Man is compounded of *Body and Soul*, so do some distinguish Murder, as depriving of Life peculiar to each, whose Welfare ought not to be disturbed in either. And therefore *Thou shalt not kill thy Neighbour* in respect of his *Bodily Life*, consisting in the *dy.* Union between Soul and Body, the breach and



dissolution whereof is the Sin directly intended to be prohibited in this Commandment. The which is capable of aggravation from Circumstances of *Dignity, Relation or Office* the Sufferer enjoyed his Life in. Whence, to murder Father, Mother or Children, (as the *Canaanites*, and afterwards some Apostate *Israelites* did, by Sacrificing their Children to the Devil) is justly abhorr'd as most unnatural, grievous and abominable. To murder *Magistrates, Judges, Publick Officers*, and especially *Kings and Princes*, upon whom the Publick Peace and safety much depends, is a far more hainous Transgression than to slay a private Person. To murder an *innocent Person*, and such as have done no wrong, nor given any Provocation, is far more than to kill the injurious and abusive. But to murder the *Vertuous and Pious*, the faithful and holy Servants of God, because their Works are good, which is the Sin of all cruel Persecutors of the Church of Christ, exceeds the Barbarity and Guilt of all Murders. And therefore doth the Blood of *Abel* cry so loud from the Ground it was spilt on; and the *Crucifixion of the Lord of Life* stand upon record as the greatest Villainy, and most remarkably revenged upon the Executioners of it and their Posterity to this day, as shall ever be instanced in. The Life of any, even in the meanest, is too precious to be rashly flung away; but the Lives of such are made Sacred, and secured moreover by their Circumstances, wherein they cannot suffer Violence, but with great Additions of Guilt.

Of the  
Soul.

Lu. 12. 4.

And tho' it be truly said, *that when Men have killed the Body, after that they have no more that they can do.* Yet doth it not follow, but that they may do more before the Body is killed, and the Soul by its dislodg-

dislodgment removed quite out of human Power and reach; when also, in a Sence, they may *kill the Soul too*. And this is the other instance of murdering our Neighbour, supposed also to be comprehended in this Prohibition. For tho' strict murder cannot be committed on the Soul, whose Life being immortal cannot possibly be lost; yet as it may be deprived of its Comforts, and made more miserable than if it were not at all, it may be said, in a Sence, to be murdered, much in like manner as the Body is. For the murder even of the Body doth not consist in a total Destruction of all Life. For the Soul which is the principal part of Man, lives no less after that than before. But only in the taking away that natural Life, that before was enjoy'd as to this present *World*. And so that of the Soul, though it introduces not a perfect insensibility, yet it despoils of that spiritual Life enjoyed in this present State; and which is more, of that also whereof it is capable in the next. And therefore the *Scriptures* give the *Soul's State* of misery the name of *Death*; and for the same reason especially fixes the Title of Murderer upon the Devil, who by the Fall, to which he induced our first Parents, wrought the Destruction both of the bodily and spiritual Life. And God then, who hath not left even the Body without the Security of his special Command for its Life, cannot be supposed to have excluded or omitted the Souls safety, which is of so much more worth, and liable to so many more and greater hazards. So that being prohibited to injure our *Neighbour* in his Body, much more so are we to wrong *him* in his *Soul*. And therefore hereby ought *men* to be restrain'd from all those *Actions*, whereby another's *Soul* may be drawn into *Sin*, which is the

only mortal hurt it is capable of ; and to be warned not to *tempt* any to do evil, either by perswasion or encouragement, or vicious Example ; nor to forbear *restraining* them there from, as much as in us lies, by just reprehensions, and wholesome Instruction, Counsel and Advice ; nor yet to neglect prudent and charitable endeavours for their Conversion and Salvation, whereby one may become guilty of the Death and Ruin of their immortal Souls.

Of so vast a Latitude is the import of this Command ; and such care hath God taken for the greater Security of our Persons, by stopping every Avenue through which, Destruction would otherwise be continually flowing in to overwhelm us. Thus then having stated the Nature of the Sin here prohibited, proceed we to consider

#### II. *The Ground and Reason of the Prohibition.*

The which, as it will not be difficult to explain, so neither to be convinced of it ; since the interest of our own Natures is so nearly concerned, and it is so much for our advantage, to have our Lives secured in the hands only of our Creator, out of the Power of wicked and unreasonable Men, so that they cannot now ravish them from us without Commission from him, but at the peril of the most hainous Guilt and severe Punishment. *Murder* not only including at once the most gross Impiety, Injustice and Uncharitableness, but also remaining the most visible Monument of present Vengeance, and token of future Destruction. So that upon the greatest Necessity, Interest and Reason, is the Sin of Murder forbid. For,

*Murder a* *It is an exceeding wrong and affront done unto*  
*wrong to* *God.* Not only in violating his positive Com-  
*God.* *mand,*

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mand, but in assuming the disposal of his Gifts, in dispossessing him of his Rights; by robbing him of a Creature, a Child, a Servant, a Subject, one whose Life is precious to him, and towards whom he beareth a tender regard; affronting him in his Image which every Man doth bear, stabbing God in Effigie, and usurping, in a high manner, his Sovereign Authority, his Throne, his Majesty, his Tribunal of Justice, and his Sword of Vengeance.

*Murder also is a main Offence against the Publick* <sup>To the Community;</sup> as it weakens its Strength, invadeth <sup>Publick.</sup> its Rights and Prerogatives of Judgment, subverts its Order, disturbs its Peace, begetting a Diffidence that tends to dissolve all human Society.

*It is apparently the highest uncharitableness and in-* <sup>To the jury to the Party murdered;</sup> inconsistent with the <sup>Person</sup> least spark of Good-will, of Pity and Humanity <sup>murdered.</sup> towards him; the utmost, malice and revenge can do, and beyond the Capacity of repair or compensation. For he that is ravish'd of his Life, loseth all the good he hath or is capable of here, and if surprized in his Sins, all possibility of ever obtaining Pardon from God, or any Happiness in the future State. So that to *hate a Brother unto Death* is the utmost pitch of Hatred, and to take away the Life of him, for whom we ought upon occasion to *lay down our Life* in imitation of, and out of respect to our Lord, is certainly the most unchristian uncharitableness.

Yea, which is more; *this Sin is of the most pre-* <sup>To the judicial consequence to a Man's self:</sup> It exposing to <sup>murderer.</sup> the Lashes of his own Conscience, and the Miseries of Divine Vengeance both of this world and the other. For there is no Sin deformeth a Man



more in the eyes of God, and of himself than this doth, under the Guilt whereof he can neither endure himself, nor be accepted with God. The two greatest Sinners left upon Record with the blackest brand upon them in Scripture, were both Murderers, viz. *Cain* and *Judas*; the one the Murderer of his Brother, the other first of his Lord and then of himself; and both, how restless under the Guilt, and detestable to God for it! For no Man can flatter and excuse himself so as to quiet his mind after the Commission of this Sin, as he is apt and able to do under the Guilt of others; the burthen whereof confounds and breaks the Mind and Conscience to pieces; fills it full of horror and disturbance, by frightful remembrances and continual representations of the murdered Person's Ghost, and Crys of his Blood for Vengeance against him. Which hath sometimes extorted a Confession, when there hath been no other proof nor evidence of the Fact, or else forc'd the guilty to put an end to the Terrours, by executing the like Cruelty on themselves, they had offer'd to others. And indeed, in vain do such endeavour to excuse and spare themselves, being so imminently exposed to the Judgments of God so almost constantly and remarkably overtaking the Murderer even in this Life, but most surely and severely meeting such in the other Life. Even the *Altar* that was a refuge for most of the other Offenders, could not be permitted to shelter a Murderer, nothing but Death expiating for such Guilt; from which, Brutes though void of Guilt were not exempted. So Sacred a thing is the Life of man in the Eyes of God, and so very dear will he have it to be accounted of among Men. And if God so seldom forbears to punish

this

Exod. 21.  
34.  
Gen. 3. 6.

this Sin even in this Life: In what much more dreadful Effects, we may conclude, will he execute his wrath against it in the next Life! Where surely, the highest degree of torment belongeth to this, so very high pitch of wickedness. For if, as our Saviour telleth us, *Hell-fire* be the Portion Mat. 5. of him that shall but call *his Brother Fool*; what 22. degree of those Burnings can we think proportionable to this, so infinitely much greater Injury?

The Consideration of all which, ought to possess us with the greatest horror and abomination of this Sin; and to make us extremely watchful of our selves, that we never fall into it; but keep at the farthest distance, and tremble at our least Approaches towards any degree or instance thereof: Endeavouring and praying for an humble and meek and charitable Temper; and especially for the continual Attendance of the preventing Grace of God, which can alone preserve and restrain us from this or any other, the most gross and destructive Transgression.

*Which God, of his infinite Mercy, vouchsafe us, for the sake, and through the merits of Jesus Christ! To whom be Glory now and for ever, Amen.*

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# SERMON XXVIII.

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## ON THE

### Seventh Commandment.

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Exod. xx. 14.

*Thou shalt not commit Adultery.*

**N**E X T to the Life there nothing is, or ought to be more dear to Mankind than Chastity, especially in the Conjugal State, which is therefore only expressed in the Commandment, as aptest to imply all the other kinds of it, designed by God to be secured hereby, according to the Perfection of his Law, and the Comprehensiveness of this System thereof. And therefore, I shall oblige my self,

I. To explain the Nature and Extent of this Prohibition.

II. Examine the Grounds and Reasonableness of its Injunction. And,

III. Direct to the most proper Preservatives from its Guilt.

*Adultery.* I. The Prohibition is, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*; which being nothing else but a Violation of the

the Matrimonial Vow, it must necessarily presuppose *Marriage*. Which was the first State of Society in Innocency, and which God instituted for the Propagation of Mankind. Till which end was attained, all Persons seem obliged thereto, and even yet are no farther excused therefrom, than is consistent with the Security of Chastity, whereof it is the last Preservative. The violation of which, in whatever Degree, falls under the Guilt of Adultery; the Prohibition whereof intends therefore the Restraint of all Uncleanness whatsoever, as inconsistent with that Purity designed hereby to be secured to us. Wherefore the Word *Adultery* in this Command, must be understood in the most extensive Signification, including all Acts of Uncleanness under this the grossest and most pernicious Instance thereof, which violates Chastity by whatever Impurity, whether in *Thought, Word or Actions*.

1. *He is a Transgressour of this Law who violates Inthought. Chastity only in very Thought*, through the Entertainment of unclean Fancies; dwelling and insisting thereon with Delight until it begets Desire, Inclination or Consent, although it do not break out into Act. For, all the Laws of God are spiritual; reaching to the very inmost Recesses of the Heart, which are all *naked and open unto the* Heb. 4. 13. *eyes of him, with whom we have to do*, however invisible to others. To which accords the very Interpretation our *Saviour* himself hath given of this Commandment, where he saith, *ye have heard that it was said by* (so it is translated in our Mat. 5. Bibles, but 'tis well known it ought to have been 27, 28. *rendred to) them of old time, thou shalt not commit Adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery*



*Adultery with her already in his Heart.* Therefore, as there is *Heart-murder*, so is there *Heart-adultery*. The one no more allowable than the other ; because the Heart is subject to the Laws of God, where Guilt is visible and odious to him, which

Mat. 5.8. is contrary to that *Purity of Heart* he requires, and whence all Action draws its Original. And

Pro. 4.23. therefore, the wise Man counsels us to *keep the*  
—6. 25. *Heart with all diligence* ; and not to *lust after*

*Beauty in Heart* ; even not to allow our selves to contemplate or desire what we are not to do, that leading directly to this, and it being much easier to abstain from Both, than to secure against the One, when the Other is allow'd. For, the grossest Act of Uncleanness begins but in Thought at first ; and having once begun there, no Man

Jam. 1.15, can assure himself where it will stop ; *Lust when it hath conceived*, naturally *bringing forth Sin* ; contemplative tending to actual Uncleanness ; and he that forbears this, allowing himself yet in that, it may well be suspected that it is rather some outward Restraint that keeps him from it, than any Conscience of the Sin ; since, if it were this, it would keep him from that too, being equally a Sin, and the way to bring it to that also. For it is the Will is the Principal Agent in the Action ; so that if the Will consents, the Man consents, and it is as much as if he had done the unlawful Act, which is only hindred by some cross Circumstance, and which perhaps could hardly be Sin without such consent first of the Will, whence all the Tincture of Guilt is derived, and whereby the Soul is stain'd, before the outward Act is committed, yea though it should be altogether hindered. And what the Sin may seem here (as one says) to want of weight, it is usually

over

over and above made up in Number ; and an unclean Thought by the frequency of being repeated may be brought to equal the Guilt of the gross Act. And therefore is it thus said of *Aholah*, that she multiplied her Whoredoms in calling to remembrance the Days of her Youth, wherein she had played the harlot. And though human Laws lay no Penalty upon Thoughts, which fall not under their Cognizance, yet with respect to God, who sees the Heart, the Sin is the same. And he that would or hath a mind to commit Adultery in any Instance of Uncleanness, though it happens that he is hindred the Act, yet is he nevertheless the Person that is guilty thereof, having done all that was in his Power towards it, and whom God counts guilty, though Men know nothing but that he is innocent.

2. *He further is a Transgressor of this Law, who In discourses against Chastity in his Discourse.* Because this not only pre-supposes Pollution in the Heart, since it is out of the Abundance of the Heart that the Mouth speaketh, but it also draws out that Guilt further, which it extends even to words ; hereby offering an occasion to excite Lust, and multiply and propagate Guilt both in the Speaker and Hearer. And there is not a more certain Sign of a Mind utterly devoid of all Purity and Vertue, than affecting obscene Talk. An unfavorable Breath not more indicating putrid Lungs, than unclean Discourse doth a rotten Heart. 'Tis a Precept of Christianity that no corrupt Communication proceed out of our Mouths ; but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers. And that Fornication, and all Uncleanness, should not be so much as once named, unless by way of detestation, as becometh Saints.

The

Ezek. 23.

Mat. 12.

34.

Eph. 4. 29.

— 5. 3.

The principal End of Speech is to praise our Creator, for which our Tongue was given us; and whence it becomes in effect, what the *Psalmist* so often terms it, *our Glory*, and the *best member we have*, whereby we excel all other Creatures below, and consort with the blessed above. The which is vilely prostituted by debasing it to the mean Employment of only interpreting the Conceptions of *Goats* and *Boars*, and the more libidinous sort of Animals; who, had they but the Organs of Speech, their Fancies lie enough that way to make them as good Company as those who more studiously apply themselves to this sort of entertainment. Indeed, 'tis said, and too much presumed upon, that *Words are but Wind*; whereas they are a Wind that are always driving us onwards either towards Heaven or Hell; and 'tis a gross mistake to suppose they vanish with the Breath they are form'd of; for, *by our words*, we are taught, *we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned*. And of all our words, methinks, one should have the least Heart to make Records of those which are smutty and obscene, which when-ever produced, will most ashamed and confound us.

Mat. 12.  
37.

Of all Discourse, therefore, that would be thought entertaining, it least concerns us to be fond of either hearing or speaking, whatever is in any Degree offensive to the most severe and strict Chastity. It being so unbecoming the Gravity of our profession; such an Abuse of Speech; such a common Pander to Lust; so injurious to Innocency; and impediment to the Success and Acceptance of all our religious Performances; it being hardly to be thought that God will ever be pleased by the Devotions of those wanton Lips that

that make themselves so common, and go a whooring from him.

This let the Youthful and Bold seriously lay to heart, who pride and delight themselves in such kind of Discourse, and contrive to shew their Wit and Mirth in almost nothing else; as if there could be Either in breaking a Commandment, and provoking God to damn them for it. Which notwithstanding the Diversion, will certainly be the Effect hereof, rendering it to such, Dear-bought Mirth, and, Fatally mistaken Wit.

3. *He, finally, is a transgressor of this Law, who in action-violates Chastity in Action*; expressing Uncleanneſs in his Deeds; usually diversified according to the Circumstances of the Persons concern'd in the Commission, to be considered either as *Married* or *Single*. In the first Circumstance, all unchaste Actions fall under the Name of *Adultery*; in the latter, of *Fornication*. Both which I shall speak to, so far as is consistent with that *Purity* and *Modesty* here required, so as not to *violate* the Commandment by *explaining* it; nor be unmindful of my *own* Duty, while I am teaching it *others*.

i. The first then, and grossest Act of Unclean- *By adul-*  
neſs more immediately here forbid, is *Adultery*; as *very*.  
restrained to the *Conjugal State*. •Which was instituted by God in Paradise, where the Woman being created out of the Man was brought and given to him for mutual Society and Propagation of their kind, whereby *they twain became one flesh*, God commanding this Order to be observed to the End of the World. And therefore a Transgression hereof, whether in *assuming* or *continuing* or *dissolving* such State, is a Violation of this Ordinance, and in some Sense or other a Sin reducible to, and implied in this of *Adultery*. For as  
this



this expresseth the grossest and most direct Violation of this first Institution of the Marriage-state, so every Act that contributes towards, or resembles it in its Deviation from the same Order that is ordain'd to restrain and prevent it, may be rightly referr'd thereto. So that, as Murder, so Adultery may be committed either *Negatively* or *Positively*.

*Negative.* *Negative Adultery* is a not endeavouring to maintain the Honour and Chastity of the Marriage-state. As Negative Murder is, as was shewn, the not doing what lies in ones Power, to preserve Life: For as this is interpretaively to take away Life, so that ~~is~~ to dishonour and defile the Marriage-state.

*Positive.* *Positive Adultery* is the actual Violation, and, as much as in us lies, Dissolution and Destruction of God's own Institution, by voluntarily transgressing the Covenant engaging us. And therefore the *Apostle* dehorting from this Sin, thus expresseth it: [Let] Marriage be honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled. For so the most approved Interpreters conclude, it ought to be read; even as an *Exhortation and Precept*, of the same kind with those immediately before and after this set down, and not as an *Affirmation* only, as our Translation representeth it; intimating that a disgracing and defiling, or not an honourable and orderly Observation of this holy Rite, is the very *Adultery* these words were intended to dehort from; which is the Affirmative Part of this Commandment, and the Duty imply'd in the Prohibition obliging us to a due Observation of those Laws whereby it ought to be govern'd. Whether, as was said,

Heb. 13.4

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1. *In the assuming of this State of Marriage*; that so it may be legally entered upon, with respect both to the *Persons* and *Manner* of contracting it. *With respect to the Persons*, it is esteemed essential to the Purity of Marriage, that it be contracted only between *one Male* and *one Female*; and which therefore is defiled by *Polygamy*. Which though connived at in the holy Men of Old, for Reasons peculiar to that Age or to God himself, yet was it never allowed by the first Institution of Marriage; wherein there were only *Two Persons* of *Different Sex* joyned, and no more Wives made for that *one Man* by God that could as easily have made *Many* as *One* for him; they *Two* only being pronounced to *become* thereby *one Flesh*. And accordingly our Saviour doth explain the Institution, and adds that *whosoever shall put away his Wife, except it be for Fornication, and shall marry another, commiteth Adultery*. Whereby is plainly intimated that the Man's marrying more Wives, or the Woman's having more Husbands than one at a Time, though even in a State of Separation, is directly the Sin of Adultery.

*In assuming the Marriage State.*

*By Polygamy.*

Mat. 19. 9.

*Sodomy.*

And as only *Two* are to be concerned in Marriage, so ought these two to be *Man and Woman*, in Opposition to all preternatural Mixtures, and those Monsters of unnatural Lust, and Prodigies of Villainy and Filthiness, not fit to be named among Men, and thought worthy to be punished even upon Beasts themselves, for which only the Names of *Sodom* and *Gommorha* are remembred as justly destroyed by Divine Vengeance in the most exemplary manner: Implying a Violation of all the Laws of Nature, as well as of God; which the *Apostle* hath rightly censured as vile, and such as God suffered the Heathen to fall into, as a just Punishment

Rom. i. Punishment for their Idolatry. *For which Cause*  
 26. 27. [even because they had *changed the Truth of God*  
*into a Lye*] God also gave them up unto vile Affec-  
 tions : for, their Women did change the Natural Use  
 into that which is against Nature : And likewise the  
 Men, leaving the Natural Use of the Woman, bur-  
 ned in their Lust, one towards another ; Men with  
 Men working that which is unseemly, and receiving  
 in themselves, that Recompence of their Error which  
 was meet.

*Incest.*

Neither yet is it sufficient to the Purity of the  
 Conjugal State, that the Persons contracted, only  
 be one Male and one Female, but also they *must*  
*not be too near of kin*, in order to prevent *Incest*,  
 which is another Sin comprehended in this Prohi-  
 bition, and which even the Sacredness of Mar-  
 riage cannot excuse from *Adultery*, nor remain  
 undefiled thereby. For, besides that God hath  
 provided against such Contracts by special Laws,  
 even Nature seems to reluctate thereto ; where-  
 by its Order would be confounded, and such a  
 Consequence of Inconveniencies ensue, as would  
 ruin both the Vertue and Comforts of Mankind.

Wherefore *the Incestuous Person* was judged wor-  
 thy to be *delivered up unto Satan*, as one of the  
 most heinous Offenders. And though it be not so  
 easie exactly to define what Degrees of Relation  
 may fall under this Prohibition, and it be ac-  
 knowledg'd that all Prohibited Degrees are not  
*Incest* of the same Nature ; yet the nearer rela-  
 ted any Persons are, to be sure, the greater is  
 the Abomination of their Conjunction ; and see-  
 ing, Choice is so much more enlarged by the Mul-  
 tiplicity of Mankind, to what it was in the In-  
 fancy of the World, when such Mixtures were  
 tolerated, if not necessitated, it cannot but be ad-  
 visable

i Cor. 5.  
5.

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visable for Men to keep at as safe a Distance, as possible, so as to avoid not only this Guilt, but even all Scruple and Question about it.

Regard then being thus had to the Legality of the *Persons assuming* the Holy State of Matrimony, essentially contributing to its Purity, the same also must be adverted to, *with respect to the Manner of contracting it.* Which as our Church hath well admonished in her Office for that End, ought not to be undertaken by any, though never so legally qualified as to their Persons, *unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly, to satisfy Men's carnal Lusts and Appetites, like brute Beasts that have no Understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the Fear of God.* For, the Institution being Divine ought not to be either neglected or profaned, but to be entred upon with God's fear, and as in his Presence, with Prayers and Benedictions for the promotion of his Service and Glory thereby.

And therefore all those Marriages that irregularly and wantonly are contracted without the Sacredness of the Solemnity, which is requisite to distinguish them from all other Bargains, and not leave it in Human Power to dissolve them at pleasure, are alien from the Institution which is God's, and are but an Human Invention to debase and set aside this, and not properly a State of Marriage which is polluted thereby, and prostituted to a more open and impudent kind of *Adultery.* And therefore it is not a Man and Woman's living together as Husband and Wife that legally makes them so, but their coming together in legal Manner according to the First Institution of that State; which was celebrated by God himself, and afterwards by such as were constituted



ted his Representatives with solemn Appeals and Prayers to him, and Benedictions procured to be given in his Name from him, as the only Security against not only Scandal given, but the Guilt of Adultery received herein. For, *Marriage* is a *Publick State*; and therefore ought to be entred into with publick Approbation. It is an *Holy Institution*, and therefore ought also to be enterprized in a religious Manner; and such contracted Co-habitation of Men with Women, as consulted neither the Publick nor Religion, violates the Purity and Sanctity of the State, and by all Christian Canons have been censured as *Adultery*, and by no means ever allowed to be pure *Marriage*. The Prohibition therefore of this Sin obligeth thus to a due Observation of those Laws, whereby the Conjugal-state ought to be govern'd in *assuming it*, with respect both to the *Persons* concern'd, and *Manner* of contracting it. And being thus *assumed*, it further obligeth to an Observation of those Laws whereby it ought to be govern'd also, as was said.

*In continuing the Marriage State.*

2. *In the continuing and preserving of it*; that it may be lawfully discharged and maintained in a due performance of those Duties that concern both the Parties, whether in *common* or *severally*.

*The Duty of married Persons.*

*In common*, it is the Duty of all married Persons to preserve the Purity and Blessing of the Marriage state with *Love* and *Fidelity* toward each other therein, according to the indispensable Obligation of both their own voluntary Compact, and the positive Divine Commands.

*Of the Husband.*

*And Severally*; as *the Husband is the Head of the Wife*, he is to *protect* and *provide* for the Welfare of both her Soul and Body; with all *Forbearance*,  
*Respect*

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*Respect and Tenderneſs*, maintaining and managing the *Authority* over her, God hath entrusted with him: So the *Wife*, being alſo *Bone of his Bone, of the and Fleſh of his Fleſh*, is bound chearfully to ſub-*Wife*. mit to ſuch his Authority, in all due *Obedience, Honour, Helpfulneſs and Modeſty*; whereby the Purity of this Holy State is preſerved, and the *Marriage-bed* kept *undefiled*, void of, and free from thoſe Contentions, Hatred, Perfidiousneſs and Eſtrangedneſs which firſt divide the Affections; and then the Bed. And therefore finally all are obliged to the Obſervation of thoſe Laws, whereby the Marriage-state ought to be govern'd.

3. Laſtly, *In diſſolving and ending it*: Which, *In diſſolving Mar-* ſince nothing now but Fornication and Death *riage; by* can do, therefore hereby are condemned all other *Divorce, or Separation.* *Divorces* and *Separate-living*, of married Perſons; upon every private Jarr, or groundleſs Jealouſie, or boundleſs Luſt; that will know no Confinement, in Violation of that Vow, which only ought to end with one of their Lives. And therefore as every married Couple ought to content themſelves with each other, ſo ought none to intrude to partake of their Enjoyments; neither ought they to admit or encourage ſuch Intruſion, or offer to forſake or defraud each other for any alien, *ſo long as they both ſhall live.*

And hence the Diſtinction that diversifies *Adultery*, doth ariſe. For either one offending Party only is *Married*, and the other *Single*, (and whether it be the Man or the Woman, the Guilt is the ſame) whereby one Bed only is defiled; or both the Parties are married, and then two Marriage-beds are defiled by one Act. In which *The Sin of* Inſtance ſoever ſuch *Uncleanneſs* be committed, *Adultery.* the Sin is grievous; being a notorious *Violation of* God's

God's own Ordinance; which we cannot think he will tamely suffer without shewing his Displeasure, and fit Resentment in due time and manner for it. An high *Breach of Charity* it is towards our Neighbours, who hereby are injur'd both in their Faith and Innocency, being tempted at once to Lust and Perjury, ruin'd in their Reputation, deprived of all that Happiness and Comfort of Life, always resulting from the inviolated Love and Fidelity of the Marriage-state, and rob'd in that Provision which is due only to a legitimate Off-spring, by having a Bastard-brood to be provided for together with them. Yea, even a *Man's own Interest* greatly suffers hereby; the Adulterer necessarily involving himself in endless and inextricable Snares and Troubles, which seldom but end in Disease, Shame, Penury, and at the best in a most tedious and painful Regret and Repentance. And finally, the *Peace and Welfare of the Publick* oft suffers no less hereby, from those Confusions and Dissentions hence occasioned, tending to dissolve the very Band of Society, and turn the rational World into a Forest of Brutes. The Consideration whereof hath all along rendered this Sin so odious, that no civiliz'd Government would ever allow it, or were unprovided of a severe Punishment for it. Among the *Jews*, where the Government was purely Divine, Death was assign'd to it, even the same Punishment that belonged to Murder, and greater than was inflicted for Theft. Many of the *Heathen Nations*, however light they made of simple Fornication, yet made Adultery Capital. And we are told particularly of our own Progenitors the *English Saxons*, that even while they remained Pagan and Idolaters, they punished both it, and *Fornication* with

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with nothing less than Death; and that they so continued to do after their Conversion to Christianity, till the Year of our Lord Christ 750, when the Antichristian See of *Rome, The Mother of Harlots*, abrogated this as too rigorous a Law for such Christians as she only required Men to be. But however Human Laws may have abated of their Severity, yet is the Law of God still the same, whose Judgment for this Sin there can be no evading or enduring; but *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will Judge*, and besure to reserve such for the utmost of his Vengeance, who would not keep themselves *Chast*, even by the Remedy that God hath provided for Mankind against *Unchastity*. Uncleanness in a *Marriage-state* being both the most *inexcusable* and *irrecoverable*; and the Flame that will not be extinguished by such an Indulgence, will be sure to kindle an everlasting Burning for its Punishment.

Such is the Nature, and such the evil of all unclean Actions referable to the Conjugal state here forbid to be defiled, whether by *Polygamy, Preternatural Mixtures, Incest, Concubinary, Divorce* or strict *Adultery*: Neither yet is it to be thought, that it is only the State which gives the Crime its Guilt, since Uncleanness is no less forbid in *single Persons*.

2. And therefore the other Sort of Unclean Deeds, distinguished according to the Circumstance of the Person offending, is *Fornication*, as referred to a single State. For though this Sin may not involve so many Parties in its Guilt, nor yet appear so complicated and aggravated a Sin as *Adultery*, yet it is no less contrary to the Mind and Laws of God, and abominable in his Sight, who by *St. Paul* tells

Rev. 17.  
5.

Heb. 13.

The Sin of  
Fornica-  
tion.

1 Cor. 6.



us that *neither Fornicators, no more than Adulterers, shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.* Nor is it to be supposed that God would ever allow his own Institution to be frustrated by that, whereof it is the designed Remedy; and which would be altogether needless, if *Fornication* might be suffered instead of *Matrimony* to administer the same Satisfaction, and possibly too, at a much easier Rate. Though even that is not without its evident Inconveniences; especially in respect to the Issue of such illegal and promiscuous Commerce; seeing the Off-spring of such Mixtures, through the uncertainty of their Father, or reproach of their Births, would be in danger to be rejected by all, or not to be provided for with the Affectionate Care of a Parent by any; and, which is worse too, be apt to be exposed, and not only forsaken but murdered.

Uncleanness therefore is not allowable in any Degree, nor in any State; against which God hath provided Marriage as the only effectual Remedy. And therefore to neglect or abuse this, is what this Commandment thus prohibits, both in the married and single State, when it saith, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery.*

The Nature and Extent of which Commandment being thus explain'd; Proceed we,

*The Sinfulness of all manner of Uncleanness.* II. To examine the Grounds and Reasonableness of the Prohibition; whereby we may become sensible, and aware of the great Evil and Malignity of the Crime, and may sincerely abhor and shun it every Instance. For which end I refer you to an impartial Consideration of the following Hints.

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1. *The absolute Inconsistency of unrestrained Lust to the Purity of Christianity*, as both taught in the Doctrine, and exemplified in the Lives of Christ and his Followers: *God having not called us unto Uncleanness, but unto Holiness,* 1 Thes. 4  
7.

2. *Its direct Violation of our most solemn Vow in Baptism*; wherein we having renounced the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, involve our selves in the Guilt of Perjury, and forfeiture of covenanted Mercy through our Indulgence of the same.

3. *Its contrariety to Reason*; debasing men into Brutes, by leaving Sense and Inclination uncontrolled, contrary to human Nature, and conformable to that of Beasts; whom therefore St. Peter calleth *natural brute Beasts made to be taken and destroyed.* And therefore also, 2 Pet. 2.  
10, 12.

4. *The speedy Destructiveness of it*, to signalize such Sinners with the wrath of God; of whom God hath declared himself the Judge, and for which both publick and private Judgments have most severely been executed by him. Heb. 13.  
4.

*Sodom and Gomorrah* were at once consum'd, to an everlasting and reproachful Proverb, by the most extraordinary and miraculous Judgment, that ever befell any place, of Fire and Brimstone, from Heaven in showers upon them, for the Sin of Uncleanness. For which also, at another time, the Apostle hath recorded that *there fell of Israel in one day, no less than Three and Twenty Thousand.* And for which the Amorites had been routed out of their Land in far greater numbers before them. And it remains still a written Decree thereupon, that *whosoever shall commit any of these Abominations shall be cut off from among their People*; being lyable to suffer the same Devastation and Ruin as those Amorites did, and multitude of 1 Cor. 10.  
8.  
Lev. 18.  
from v. 24.  
to 30.

other ancient People have for the same Sin ; For  
 Eph. 5. 6. *because of these things* (St. Paul declares) *cometh the*  
*wrath of God upon the Children of disobedience.* Let  
 Wits say what they will or can in Extenuation  
 or defence of the Crime ; let the careless Magi-  
 stracy connive thereat ; God to be sure, will not,  
 he will *Visit for these things* ; and one may certain-  
 ly prognosticate the decay or ruin of that Nation,  
 where once may be observed, this Sin to be either  
 encouraged or not severely punished.

And then, in respect of particular Persons,  
 there is no Sin of a more malignant Aspect in pri-  
 vate Judgments against Men's interest, than this  
 of Uncleanness. Which plagues *the Body* with  
 loathsome disease and rottenness of Flesh and  
 Prov. 5. 11. Bones, that will *lie down with it in the dust* ; dis-  
 Job. 20. 11. membring it from the Body of Christ to become  
 1 Cor. 6. 15. *the Member of an Harlot* ; and turning it, *the Tem-*  
 —ver. 19. *ple of the Holy Ghost*, into a Sty of Filth and sacri-  
 leigious Uncleanness : Like an hidden Canker con-  
 suming *Estates*, and reducing to a penurious *mor-*  
 Prov. 6. 26. *sel of Bread* : Blasting the *Reputation* : Leaving a  
 blot and a wound upon posterity : Afflicting the  
 Job 24. 15. 16. *Soul* with Fears and Shame, with burning De-  
 & 17. sires and impatient Waitings, tediousness of De-  
 lay, and sufferance of Affronts, Agonies of Jeal-  
 ousie, and Amazements of Discovery. Effeminat-  
 ing the Mind ; vitiating the Appetite to every  
 Hof. 4. 11. thing that is good ; *taking away the Heart* ; and  
 Prov. 2. 19. *fearing Conscience* in a State of final Impenitence  
 —23. 27. here ; *leading down to the Chambers of Death and*  
 —5. 5. *Hell* hereafter. Insomuch that it is observed, that  
 wherever we find recorded, in holy Scripture, a  
 List of those Sins which bar Men Heaven, this  
 Gal. 5. 19. of Uncleanness hath always a special place there-  
 1 Cor. 6. 9. in. So reasonable is the Prohibition ; and on so  
 just

## Vol. II. *One the Seventh Commandment.* 73

just Grounds, and weighty Considerations doth it concern every one to dread and shun its Evil and Guilt. For which end, let a word also be added, as was promised,

III. Lastly, *To direct to the most proper and effectual Preservatives against it.* The Obligation of the Commandment requiring Implicitly, a sincere regard to, and use of means against the Sin, it explicitly forbids. The Particulars whereof are reduceable to that most expedient Advice of St. Paul's, in few, yet comprehensive words, requiring all to *flee Fornication*, implying, as requisite to the present Purpose, these three distinct Directions, viz. That we *do never stand to resist, but run* from the Temptations thereto; that we use *Hast and Speed in so doing*; and that we remove and keep our selves at as great a distance as may be therefrom, by avoiding the occasions and seeking protection.

1. *Never stand to resist, but rather run from the snares to any Uncleanness.* This Sin being not to be opposed by Arguments, as others may; but is escaped only by Avoidance, and its Offers rejected by not hearkening to them. For it hath a peculiar Interest within us; and corrupt Inclination will be apt to answer; if not kept out of the hearing of its Call: So that to stand here will be to lose ground, and to admit a Parley to hazard a surprize; the very Arguments wherewith we answered a Lust tainting our Innocency, and leaving an unsavory Relish behind. Lust both defiles and hurts; no more to be handled than Pitch, which is hardly to be drawn from our clothes without sticking to our fingers, and no nearer to be approached than Fire, wherewith



Jam. 4. 7. with a man may be in danger to be burnt even in quenching his own house. The *Devil resisted, will flee from us*, in any shape except of this Sin; wherein to overcome him it will concern us to *flee from him*; and to fight him, as the *Parthians* most successfully fought their Enemies, *fleeing*. And,

2. Use great hast and speed in thus doing, which the Advice implies by the word made choice of to express Agility and Swiftnes of Motion. *Delay*, which is dangerous in all Sin, being fatal in this; where Temptations are nimble and strong, and so difficultly dispossessed. Few but have dallyed too long, and trifled too much already in some degree or other of its Guilt. Oh, let none dare, or be willing to provoke God, and hazard his own everlasting safety any further, by continuing a moment longer therein! Consider, if you are *Young*, the greater need you have to beware hereof; the greater Vertue will your avoiding it be esteemed and rewarded to you; and the easier will it render the Security of your Purity to you in the future Stages of Life. If you are *grown Men*, the use of Reason ought to engage you to more masculine and useful Entertainments; and the Assistances of God's Grace will enable you to disentangle your selves, if ever, from the Bonds of this Sin. And, if you are *Old*, the thoughts of Death, and decays of Nature ought to chill such Flames; which neglected in any Age will be apt to get an Head, that will turn all to its own fuel, and never go out till smother'd in its own Embers. And therefore the Flame that threatens nothing less than a Conflagration cannot be extinguished too early. And after all,

3. Lastly, *Keep your distance as wide as may be from all approaches hereto*, by avoiding all occasions

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ons thereof, and seeking Protection of all due aids and defence against it. The hast and swiftness of the remove, advised to, not being relaxed, but always continued, necessarily implying the greatness of distance to be also requisite thereto. And therefore, that our whole Life may be one continued flight from this Sin, we ought always to be *fleeing from*, and our Distance, which can never be too far, be as *far* as may be to secure us safe from its Evil ; it will be requisite,

1. To *keep strict watch*, and continued restraint upon the *Senses* ; which are the Avenues whereat the Infection first enters ; being in *Covenant with our Eyes*, and Hearts and Hands, neither to look, nor think, nor touch Lustfully ; but resolved rather to lose any of the most useful of those Members, than to lose our Innocence and Felicity by them. Job. 31. 1.  
Pro. 6.  
25.  
Mat. 5.  
28, 29, &  
30.

2. To *abstain from all Familiarity* with Persons of *loose or immodest Behaviour* ; whose not only Examples are contagious, but their Wills malicious to infect.

3. To *shun Idleness, Sloth and Ease* ; which not only disposes the Flesh to *Lust*, but tempts the Temptor to administer occasions to it. Nor yet,

4. To *make any wanton Diversions*, ever our Employment : Such are reading loose and immodest Books, hearkning to impure and smutty Songs, resorting to offensive Plays and the like ; which are always either effects of Lust already kindled, or else Provokers and Inflamers thereof, inconsistent with that Apostolick Caution of *walking honestly as in the day, not in Chambering and Wantonness*, Rom. 13.  
13. which tend to debauch the Mind and Manners ; but in Vertue and Sobriety, which improve both, and extinguish all sinful Lust. Another expedient against this Sin, is,

5. To

5. To be exercised much and often in some Performance of Religion; which would impart a new relish to the Soul, and afford not only Reason, but Sense against Carnality, from the much sweeter delights of Devotion, preferable to the violent and short Titillations of an Impure Fancy. Where-

Prov. 2. fore observeth Solomon, *When Wisdom entreth in-  
10, 11, & to thine Heart, and Knowledge is pleasant unto thy  
16. Soul, Discretion shall preserve thee, Understanding  
shall keep thee, even from strange Women.* And again,

Eccles. 7. *Whoso pleaseth God, shall escape from her, but the Sin-  
26. ner shall be taken by her.* Only Ignorance and Estrangedness to the pleasant Paths of Vertue, recommending the fulsome and false Pleasures of Lust. A further Preservative against which, is also,

6. To abstain from Luxury, and all Intemperance; whereby the Flesh is pamper'd, and Nature enfeebled in every thing, but her Propensions to Lust, whence, among the Causes of Sodom's Uncleanliness, *Fulness of Bread* is took Notice of by the Prophet. And 'tis St James's Observation of such as *have lived in Pleasure on the Earth, and nourished their Hearts as in a Day of Slaughter*, that

Ezek. 16. 49. *they have consequently been wanton.* Temperance and Mortifications are requisite to reduce corrupt Carnality to due Chastity. To which Purpose also it is expedient,

7. To avoid all Immodesty in Apparel; which is not only an incentive of Lust in those that use it, but more especially in those that gaze thereon; its end and design being to draw in Admirers, who at once may give up their own Chastity, and assail that of their Tempters. Nor is it to be omitted, as a further Advice in this Case,

8. Never

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8. *Never willingly to recall any immodest Action to mind*, but with the greatest abhorrence and Detestation ; which otherwise, will be to Act over the same Sin again, and involve in greater Guilt than the rash acting thereof, both as it shews the Heart to be set upon filthiness, and is also a Preparation it self to more Acts thereof. To all these, and whatever other helps, must be added,

9. *Fervent Prayer*, which both by way of *Reward* and *Impetration* hath a natural Tendency for Success herein. To which, when all fail, the last Remedy to be added, is what God himself hath provided for us, Even,

10. *Marriage* ; which becomes an indispensable Duty to every one who cannot live Innocently, Pure and Chaste without it, and hath a natural Efficacy beside a Blessing to cure the Inconveniences, which otherwise might afflict Persons temperate and sober. To which therefore as all ought, reverently and in the fear of God, to betake themselves, so ought they to preserve it inviolably ; there being no further, either Indulgence or Hopes to restrain him who ventures to break these Bounds. And therefore is this Commandment, which forbids all uncleanness, fix'd alone to this against *Adultery*, which is a Violation of the *Marriage-state*, as being the last and utmost means, beyond which there can be made no other Provision for the Security of Chastity. That therefore we may preserve our Purity, and avoid the Pollution of impetuous Lust, it is enjoyn'd, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery.*

To which, God give us all his effectual Grace to conform our selves, in a most intire and sincere Obedience ! *That our Flesh being subdued*



Collect for  
First Sun-  
day in  
Lent.

*Sermon the Twenty Eighth. Vol. II.*

*due to the Spirit, we may ever obey his Godly  
Motions, in Righteousness and true Holiness, to  
his Honour and Glory, who liveth and reigneth  
with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God,  
world without end. Amen.*

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SER.

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## S E R M O N XXIX.

O N T H E

## Eighth Commandment.

Exod. xx. 15.

*Thou shalt not Steal.*

**N** E X T after the Security of *Life* and *Chastity*, God hath provided for the safe and comfortable Enjoyment of our Goods, by enacting also this further Law prohibiting *Theft*. The *Nature* and *Ground*, whereof to state and explain as plainly, and profitably as I can, will be the Argument of this Discourse. And therefore consider we,

I. *What it is to steal.* Whereby we shall know what Sins fall under the Prohibition hereof, in order to avoid the Transgression of this Commandment. The which, (not regarding the Import only of the word in its restrained Sense, without the design of the Precept in its comprehensive Intent) cannot otherwise be conceived of, than as an *unjust Violation of that Property, to which every man, in some degree or other, hath a Right.* *Unjust*, I say, because otherwise it is rather an Alienation, though not always implying the Consent

sent of the present Possessor, where a Superior Proprietor is the Disposer ; whereby that Act of the *Israelites* in spoyling the *Egyptians* of their Goods, when they left their Land, is cleared from the Guilt of this Sin of *Stealing* ; because done by an expresse Command of God, to whom the Supreme Dominion of all things unalienably belongeth, and who may justly transfer the Right and Property where he pleaseth, and more especially here in lieu of the *Israelites* Wages due to them from the *Egyptians*, for their tedious Servitude among them. And this was, it seems, their Plea many Ages after, when in the time of *Alexander the Great*, the *Egyptians* sued the *Jews* by a Juridical Process to have recovered what was so taken from them. For that there is a Property establish'd among Men, is necessarily supposed in this Prohibition ; because where nothing doth of Right appertain to another, nothing can be unjustly taken or detained from him. And how Man came by such Right at first, and how it is still continued in the World, is very clearly accountable from the Donation of God to him, who is the sole and absolute Proprietor of all things ;

*The Earth being the Lords, and the fulness thereof ; the*

*World and they that dwell therein : But the Earth hath*

*he given to the Children of Men ;* who therefore under him are Proprietors of this lower World ; to divide and appropriate the Possession thereof among themselves, to Kingdoms, Families, and particular Persons, by mutual Consent and Compact ; whereby a just Title is derived to the present Possessor, so far as Providence permits, whose Right it still remains to interpose and over-rule in putting down one, and setting up another at his own Pleasure. And that such Division is lawful, (the

Psal. 24. 1.

115. 16.

-75. 7.

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(the things of this World being never intended to remain in *Common*, so that all should have an equal Right to every thing, but that every Man should know what is his own and be *Content* *therewith*,) is evident not only from the reason of the thing, but from the Absurdity of its contrary, wherewith no Society or Peace could possibly be consistent. And therefore that *Community* which we read of, in the *Acts of the Apostles*, that was in the Primitive Church, appeareth to be neither of Divine Institution, but the result only of their own Free-Will; nor inducive of any Obligation; Christianity leaving them even then at Liberty, whether they would part with their Property or no. *Christ* hath declared, that *his Kingdom is not of this World*; and that he will not meddle with the Inheritances thereof; leaving things as he found them, as to the Rights and Properties of it; intending the bettering Men's Souls, and not the disposing of their Estates. And therefore as there can be no earthly *Dominion* founded in *Grace*; so neither is earthly Propriety inconsistent with *Grace*; or left to be established only by *Power*; being thus settled by the Donation of God and Sanction of human Laws, allotting to each Man his Portion; which to invade or usurp from him, is a Violation of his Property, and the Sin prohibited by this Commandment. The Guilt whereof, however various the ways may seem of incurring, yet may the most material of them be reducible to these two. *viz. The with-holding from another what he hath Right to Possess.* And, *the taking such Possession thereof from him.*

Heb. 13.  
5.

Act. 4. 35.

Jo. 18. 36.

I. *The with-holding from another what he hath Right to Possess*, is a certain Violation of Property, for bid by this Commandment under the Sin of

By with-  
holding  
Right.

G

*Stealing;*



*Stealing*; because it spoils him of his Due, which is as much *Theft* as to dispossess him of his Enjoyment. And therefore this forbids,

Not Pay-  
ing Debts.

1. *The Not paying what is Borrowed*; because lending doth not alienate the *Property*, but only credits the *Use* of any thing for a certain Time. And therefore, as there ought to be a Repayment, so ought it to be made, if possible, at the time agreed upon: After the Expiration whereof the Creditor hath as much Right to the Use and Possession of the Goods he hath lent, as to the Goods themselves which are his own; to defraud him whereof is to take from him what he once had, and to leave him worse than we found him. The Rule of common Justice will therefore oblige Men never to borrow more than they have a fair Prospect of Re-paying; unless he that trusteth knoweth their Inability and is willing to run the hazard. Nor to borrow upon false, or insufficient Securities, such as bad Mortgages, counterfeit Pawns, or insolvent Bonds Men; neither to defer and protract their Payments without their Creditors Consent; nor finally, to refuse and deny, or take indirect Courses, either to abate or avoid Payment, by forcing their Creditors upon often and fruitless Attendances, troublesome and costly Suits to recover their own, or by pleading Protections, or sheltering themselves in a Prison or Privilege-plate, or by fraudulent Breakings, necessitating them to compound to their great Loss. Which soever of these, or the like ways is took, the Creditor is deprived of his Right thereby, by having it dishonestly with-holden from him, by one kind of Thievery, falling under the Sin prohibited in this Commandment. Which also forbid,

2. The

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2. *The not satisfying even what we are engaged in for another.* Because such Engagement maketh the others Debt our own, in Case that other either cannot or will not discharge it; and which is to be supposed the principal Inducement of his Lending. Wherein if he be deceived, his loss and wrong will lie at our Door, who stand bound to secure him from both. And therefore the very same Reasons that make our own unpaid Debts Theft, make those also of others no less so in this Case. The which Consideration, though it be a good Argument for Caution how we enter such Engagements, yet must it be no Excuse to break them afterwards.

*What we are bound for others*

3. *The not doing also what we have promised,* is another branch of *Stealing*, by with-holding, in like manner, from another what he hath a Right to possess. For though this may be only a denying him what he never yet had, yet it is what he hath a Right to have, and may expect and depend on to have by Vertue of the Promise made to him; and so the not performing, is a Disappointment, and robbing him of his Title thereto, and lessening of his Possession. And therefore in all Bargains and Agreements, though to the certain Prejudice of one, yet ought both sides to stand thereto, unless the Obligation be null'd by Consent. A good Man though he sweareth to his own hurt, yet is he described to be one that *changeth not*; but upon demand is ready and willing to fulfill his Promise. The breach whereof necessarily derives the Guilt of Theft then upon such who defraud the King of his Tribute, or the Minister of his Dues, or the Landlord of his Rent, or the Servant and Labourer of their Wages, for which there is a Promise and Compact necessarily

*Performing Promises.*

*Psal. 15. 4.*

supposed, the breaking whereof intrencheth on the others Property, and is a manifest Transgression of this Commandment. And the same is further,

Requiting  
Kind-  
nesses.

4. *The not requiting, according to our Power and Opportunity, the Benefits bestowed upon us.* Ingratitude is the most odious kind of Injustice; and he that is guilty of it, the worst Thief, because thereby he becomes so only to his very best Friends. For there is always a Right acquired by Benefits, where there was none Antecedently. He that doth a good turn, merits and deserveth of him that receiveth it; and what he deserveth he hath a Right to. So that every Receiver is Debtor to his Benefactor. He oweth him all the Goods he receiveth from him, and is always obliged to a thankful acknowledgement, and when ever he hath opportunity, to an equivalent Requital; the with-holding whereof, when demanded or needed, is a denial of what is right and just, and is the basest of Robbery in Contempt of this Prohibition of it. And so again is,

Restituti-  
on.

5. *The not making Restitution, where we can, of the Legal Rights whereof we have, in any degree deprived another.* For, a wrongful Seizure is no just Alienation of Right; which still remains the same being usurp'd, as when it was quietly enjoy'd. And consequently till it be restored, unjust Possession is but a continued and prolonged Theft. And therefore such as are conscious of any wrong done to the Property of another, stand bound by Virtue of this Commandment to make a perfect and plenary Satisfaction: Not only confessing the fault to God, and begging his Pardon for it, but by restoring the with-holden Right to the injured Person, and to the very utmost of their Power, recompencing to him all the Damage they

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they have done him ; if living, to himself ; if dead to his Heirs ; or otherwise, to the Poor, who are God's Substitutes, to receive it for him who is Lord of all to whom it is then escheated ; yet not without sorrow for having so long deferred Restitution to the wronged Person himself, till now we are rendred incapable so to do. And the more difficult it seems to do this, the greater Horreur ought we to have of the Sin necessitating hereto. In a word,

6. And Lastly, *The not giving also what another may want, and desires, and we may and ought to supply him with,* is another Instance of the Sin here forbid, in with-holding from another what he hath a Right to possess. For to whomsoever God hath given a Being, he hath also given him a Right to a maintenance thereof, which in some fair way or other, ought to be obtained ; either by *Legal Right*, or by *Humble Request* ; so as that where the former is denied, the latter is granted, which in Conscience, ought to take Effect as well. For though in the unequal Division of the World that now is, God hath given a large share of it to some than to others ; yet it is not to be supposed he hath appropriated all to some, so as to leave nothing for others. Therefore hath he out of every Man's Estate, and Property reserved some appropriate Portion to be disposed of to the Poor and Needy, who have nothing else to subsist on, and have as much Right and Title to what we can spare them, as we our selves have to any part of what we enjoy, even by the free Donation of God ; and which is not to be with-held from them, without manifest wrong done them, and defrauding them of their proper Portion by down-right Robbery.

Such



Such are the Instances forbid under this first way of committing Robbery, in any whereof who ever with-holds from his Neighbour, he surely Steal from him, and is a Transgressor of this Precept.

By Dispos-  
sessing of  
Right, by

2. The other way of Violating anothers Property, so as to incur the like Guilt, is the taking away from another what he is already possessed of. And this kind of Stealing is diversified according either to the Goods taken, or the Manner of taking them.

1. According to the Goods taken from another by Theft; if they be,

Sacrilege.

Such as are consecrated and devoted to the Service of God; the Alienation of them therefrom by appropriating them to common or private Use, is Sacrilege. Whereof they become Guilty, who alienate or detract from any of the Possessions, or Utensils, or Emoluments and Encouragements, that have been set apart for the maintenance of God's Honour and Service in the Church, and is the highest Instance of Injustice, as usurping upon the Rights of Divine Majesty. And therefore the Prophet Malachi reflects upon this Sin with Astonishment at its hainousness, and Denunciation of the Curse attending it: Will a

Mal. 3. 8.

Man Rob God? [For one Man to Rob another, is a great Injustice; but for the Creature to Rob his Creator, is the boldest Impiety.] But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In Tithes and Offerings. [Things dedicated to the Service of God, being wholly and for ever alienated from human Use and Possession, not to become Man's again without God's own Commission for it;] therefore, it is added, Ye are cursed with a Curse [even in a peculiar and extraordinary Manner] for ye have robbed me, even this whole Nation.

Ver. 9.

2. The

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2. The Goods stole may be such as are *Immoveable*. For Stealth, in a more unlimited and *False Titles*. Theological Sence doth not always imply the carrying away from another, inasmuch as Property may be invaded, by taking away only the Enjoyment and Profit, though the Goods remain. Which is the Theft of those who any way unjustly despoil another of his House or Land, which, though they cannot carry away, yet may they carry away the Possession and Benefit thereof. And if the depriving another of his Household-Goods or Fruit be Theft, much more is the taking from him the Ground from whence the Fruit ariseth, or the House wherein the Goods were kept.

3. The Goods again stole may be such as are *Common*; to which Appropriation not extending, *Ingrossing*. every Man hath an equal Title. (As to drink of the River, and partake of the refreshment of the Air and Sun, &c.) which to hinder any from, would be to steal from their common Right, by changing it into a particular Property, the which Usurpation is the Sin of *Ingrossing*.

4. The Good's stole, further, may belong to the Publick, and yet not be Common. As when *Wrong-ing Publick*. the Rights of any Society or Common-wealth are unjustly invaded; by taking away Lands or Privileges appropriated to publick Use and Enjoyment; by defrauding of Tribute; by Clipping, Coyning, Adulterating, or any other way impairing the publick Coyn. These being all Intrenchments upon the Goods of the publick, are properly Thefts of them; and are by so much the more Criminal, as the wrong is Universal. Also,

5. The Goods stole are, we know, sometimes *Kidnap-ping*. even *Mens Persons*; being the evil Trade of some, to espiret others into Slavery; in whom *Relations*

and the Publick have an Interest, and suffer wrong and loss hereby; and which therefore God particularly forbids as *Theft*, in the Chapter following the *Text*, under the severer Penalty of Death?

Exod. 21.  
16.

*Stolen  
Marri-  
ages.*

*He that stealeth a Man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to Death.* Under which Commination, those also may deservedly be doomed, who deal in *Stolen-Marriages*; whether as Principal or Accessary; whereby *Parents* are so sensibly injured, an holy Ordinance profaned, and *Sorrow* and *Ruin* generally created. So variable, according to the Goods taken away, are the kinds of *Theft*, implied in the Sin here prohibited. And no less so are they,

2. According to the Manner of taking them. Which if it be with *Violence*, then the Sin is called *Rapine*, if with *Clandestine Fraud*, then it is called *Deceit*.

*Rapine* is stealing from another with *Violence*; which is the most Direct breach of this Commandment; and whereof a Man may become guilty, either *Directly* or *Indirectly*.

*Direct.*

*Direct Rapine* is, when with malicious and covetous Intent, one designedly spoils another. Which they are guilty of, who *Rob* either upon the *High-way*, or *Plunder Houses*, or *Pilfer* their Neighbour's Goods, or *Exact* from and *Oppress* them, either upon the account of their weakness or necessity: Who not being content with their own Portion allotted them by God, will not suffer others to enjoy quietly theirs, but seek forcibly to augment their own, by lessening that of others; which all own and condemn as *Thievery*.

*Indirect.*

*Indirect Rapine* is, when a Man either *Partakes* in such Fact, or becomes guilty of such Sins, as incline and tend thereto.

In



*In the former Sense*, this Commandment is broke by those, that any way concur to the Commission of *Theft*, whether by Counselling, Contriving, Commanding, Conniving at, Receiving, Concealing, Helping, Sharing, or by whatsoever other occasion, furthering the same; contrary to our Duty, obliging all to do, what in them lies, to hinder and prevent, to detect and punish Sin; and endeavour not only to maintain our own, but to preserve our Neighbour's Goods.

*In the latter Sense*, they become guilty of the Sin here forbid, who incapacitate themselves to live without the Temptation of Stealing, whether through *Idleness*, *Prodigality*, *Improvvidence*, *Covetousness* or *Distrustfulness* of God's Providence to care for them; the which Sins are therefore forbid also under this Command, as being all direct occasions of its Breach. For,

1. They that are *Idle* are necessitated, like *Idleness*. Drones, to live upon other Mens Labour; and either defraud the Common-wealth of their Service, or the Poor of their Alms. And therefore, as every Man is obliged hereby to have some *Calling*, wherein he may serve his Country and maintain himself, so ought he to take care that his *Calling* be such only as is honest and *lawful*, that his Gain thereby may be so too; which otherwise will be justly charg'd upon him as stolen, being got by unlawful Courses, and by an *Industry* that may be worse than *Idleness*. And so,

2. *Prodigality* that unnecessarily and impru- *Prodigality*. dently doth waste, whether in Apparel, or Gaming, or Debauchery, what our own, or our Ancestors *Industry* had got, or the Providence of God bestowed upon us, doth rob not only from our selves and Family, but usually reduceth to such



such Necessities as prove Temptations to rob others. As also,

*Improvidence.*

3. *Improvidence*, which is a careless Neglect or imprudent Management of worldly Concerns, notoriously doth the very same. And therefore this Command forbidding *Theft*, necessarily enjoyns upon this account a diligent frugal Care in those lawful Callings, wherein the Providence of God hath set us; according to St. Paul's implicit Interpretation hereof, *Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his Hands the thing that is good that he may have to give to him that needeth*; implying that he that doth not Work, so as to be able to give to others that may need from him, is a Thief, both to himself and such. And then,

*Covetousness.*

4. *Covetousness*, all acknowledge to be the Original of all Injustice; it being an unmerciful Principle that will pity nor spare one, that will do right to none, will wrong any; and put Men upon the basest and most fordid, yea horrid means to satisfy its unsatiable Lust. And,

*Distrust.*

5. Finally; he that *Distrusteth* God's Care for him, will be tempted to any Means for Provisions for himself, and will have no more regard for the Laws than he hath for the Providence of God. And therefore the Prohibition of this Sin obligeth all to trust God, and to rely upon his Providence in the use of our own lawful Care and Industry in

*Pf. 55. 22.*

*Heb. 13.*

*Deceit.*

an honest Calling; *Casting our Care and Burthen upon him, who hath promised to sustain us*, and said, that he will never leave nor forsake us.

6. The other Instance, according to the Manner of taking away Goods from another, by *Theft* here forbid, is, as was said, *Deceit*; which is Stealing from another with *Clandestine Fraud*, and is generally

generally concerned in either matters of *Trust*, or matters of *Traffick*.

*Deceit in matters of Trust*, is the Sin, against this *In Trust*, Commandment, of those who being made *Arbitrators* in any Difference, *Executors* of any ones Will, *Guardian* to Orphans, *Steward* to an Estate, *Keeper* of any Pledge, or *Servant* entrusted with anothers Business, do neglect or falsifie, or not use their utmost Skill and Fidelity in the honest discharge of such Trust. Because hereby, in effect, such will have borrowed anothers Person, freely lent, only to rob and despoil him; and from his Confidence in their Truth and Fidelity, have basely taken occasion to defraud him of the Trust he had deposited in their Hands and Disposal, and whereto he was rightly Entitled. And therefore this is the most treacherous sort of Thievery; and is the joyning of two great Sins in one, *Defrauding* and *Promise-breaking*.

*Deceit in matters of Traffick*, whether in *Buyer* *In Traffick*, or *Seller*, is the Sin of those, who in Violation also of this Precept,

1. *Aquivocate or Falsify* in any Bargain: Endeavouring to make it unjustly advantageous only to themselves, by disparaging another's Commodity, or over-valuing their own; or by asking far beyond, or bidding much below the worth; saying, they cannot take less or give more, when they know they may and will, profitably enough, pretending what is false, covering what is true; lying upon the Catch to get or save a little more from him than what is justly their Due; hereby invading another's Property, in an undue Manner, and so far defrauding him of what becomes as sole to them. So also it is their Sin, who,

2. *Impose*

2. *Impose on another's Ignorance or Unskilfulness*: Reserving their faulty Wares to put off to them of less Knowledge, which they will not shew to Men of Skill: Or having one price for the Ignorant, and another for the Intelligent of the very same Commodity; which is an adding of Loss to their Affliction; and making Men to fare the worse, because God made them no better, which they could not help; and therefore is not only *Injustice* but *Inhumanity*. So, again, those are guilty, who,

3. *Take Advantage of another's Necessity*: Whether by beating down the Price of the Seller, who they know is forced to part with his Commodity for their Money; or by squeezing and wringing what they can out of the Buyer, whom they know to stand in need of what they profess to sell and must have it, whatever it cost him. This also being to add Oppression to Misery, and to spoil without Mercy. Much more directly is it, finally, the Sin of them who,

4. *Substract from the Commodity or Price contracted for*. Whether by falsifying their Weights or Measures, or paying uncurrent Money, or forcibly detaining any part of the Price agreed on: which are direct Injuries bringing Loss, and diminishing another's Property against his Consent for the unjust increase of their own.

Many are the Opportunities and more the Dangers of *Deceit* in Traffick: And therefore, as a Man had need beware of going to the utmost of what he conceives to be lawful; because he will venture thereby to the Brink of a Precipice, where he cannot stand but in danger, and whence, e'er he is aware, may fall headlong; so, in doubtful Cases a wise Man will be sure to chuse the safest part. Not only because a good and quiet  
Con-

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Conscience is to be valued above the greatest worldly Gain; but also because to set Innocency upon a meer Chance, and to trifle with what is so sacred, is but one Degree of a Presumption short of wilful Guilt. The Rule therefore, here, is this, That *what is not unreasonable for us to desire to gain by another being the Seller, ought to be allowed to be got from us being the Buyer: And what we judge not unreasonable to be gain'd by us, being the Buyer. That and no more ought to be desired to be got from another by us being the Seller.* Which is but the Accommodation of that general standing Rule of all Equity and Justice, viz. *All things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* Mat. 7. 12.

The Nature of the Sin prohibited in this Commandment having been thus stated, it only remains that, as was proposed, we now inquire into the other Part allotted this Discourse, which is

II. *The Grounds and Reasonableness of this Prohibition*; wherein Temporal Interest, which all are so tender of, and most partial to, being so much and nearly concerned, they will more easily be received, since only the Sanction of this Law is all the Security we have for the Enjoyment of our Property; without which, Power and Cunning, would be little Defence to our selves, less Security to others, and no Deference at all to the Nature, Government or good Pleasure of God. And therefore in respect to God, to Others and Our-selves, this Sin of *Stealing* and all Injustice is most equitably and mercifully here forbidden us. For,

I. *In respect to God*; the Transgression of this Commandment prophanelly insults over and contradicts

*The sinfulness of Theft.*  
*In respect to God.*



dicts his essential *Justice*, his providential *Prerogative*, and revealed *Will*.

*His Justice.*

*God's Essential Justice* is our great Obligation to be just too: Because his Nature is the Standard of ours, and the great Exemplar and Pattern, so far as it is imitable, of all reasonable Natures, as being it self the most reasonable. And therefore 'tis certainly fit that all reasonable Beings should deal by one another, as God, who is the most reasonable, dealeth by them, who is *Just and True in all his ways; and Righteous and Upright in all his Judgments*. And therefore while Men take the liberty to defraud and injure one another, they degenerate from the Rectitude of reasonable Nature, become most unlike to God; and use one another as they would be loth that God should use them.

*Providence.*

*The Prerogative of God's Providence*, also, obligeth all quietly to submit to its Allotments, suffering others to enjoy those Portions shared and divided them thereby, and being satisfied with our own as best for us. For, to God alone belongeth the Right to dispose of all these worldly Enjoyments, to every one their own Proportion, as he shall think best. And whatever then is mine or thine, it is so by the wise and rightful Dispensation of God, which it is our Duty to abide by, and not only in vain, but our Loss to oppose. And therefore by unjustly depriving another Man of his Property, we do not only rob him of his Right to enjoy it, but we also rob God of his Right to dispose of it, and invade his Province of *bestowing his own* where he pleaseth; refusing to be concluded by his Allotment, carving for our selves, taking what and where we can catch it, living no longer at God's but at our own Allowance; which

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is Rebellion against his Providence, and a State of Out-lawry to his Government.

Finally, *God's Revealed Will* indispensibly requireth Honesty and Justice in all our Dealings; in-  
somuch that no Service without it, can possibly be  
accepted of with him; which is the Sum and  
Design of a great Part of our Religion, teaching  
us to *live Righteously* as well as *Godtily*, and assu-  
ring us that no *unrighteous Person* shall inherit the  
*Kingdom of God.* Com-  
mand.  
Tit. 2. 12.  
1 Cor. 6.  
9.

So that it is not only the Person who is spoiled  
of his Possessions, that is injured by the Sin here  
forbid; but it is the Nature of God that is con-  
tradicted, the Authoritative Disposals of his Pro-  
vidence that are usurp'd upon, and his most Ho-  
ly Will, which is our Religion, that is reproach'd  
and frustrated. And therefore in regard thus to  
God, is the Sin of *Stealing* reasonably prohibited,  
as being impious. The same it is,

2. *In respect to others*; the Transgression of this  
Commandment forbidding what, no less tends to  
the Disturbance and Overthrow of Human Order  
and Happiness in the World; where Justice be-  
ing the main Pillar and Support, without it, ra-  
tional Beings can never unite or live comforta-  
bly together. For, all mutual Trust and Confi-  
dence being banish'd thereby, every one would  
be forced to stand upon his own Guard in con-  
tinual Expectation of Mischief from every one;  
rendering all Intercourse to consist in a Trade of  
Diabolical Knavery in doing and retaliating In-  
juries. Because, though a Man can and doth  
pardon an Injury, that hath received one; yet he  
that hath done it, cannot believe so; but fearing  
Revenge, he will be sure to seek to anticipate and  
prevent it by further Injuries; which therefore  
is necessary to the Opinion of the

necessitating a speedy Return to the first Wrong, makes every Injury to endanger the Peace and Security of Mankind, and to lay the Foundation of perpetual Mischief.

In regard  
to our  
selves.

3. Lastly, In regard to our selves, the Transgression of this Command appears to be more sensibly injurious, even against every particular Man's single Interest; being a Sin that exposeth the Person to corporal Punishment, Reputation to infamy, Estate to ruin, Conscience to trouble both in Life, and more especially at Death, and the Soul, however most assuredly, after Death, to everlasting Damnation: For all which Evils, its Gains will but little Recompence. And which therefore being duely considered will convince of the Reasonableness of this Prohibition, and be a sufficient Dissuasive against meddling with a Sin upon so hard Terms, that must be paid so very unreasonably dear for. For, as was said,

Judg-  
mentis.

It certainly exposes the Guilty Person to corporal Punishment. Some untimely stroke usually cutting such off, either by the Hand of Human Justice with Shame and Reproach, or by the immature Judgment of Divine Wrath with Grief and Amazement. For, thus we read it threatned by the

Pl. 55. 23.

Prophetick Psalmist, Thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the Pit of Destruction: Bloody and deceitful Men shall not live out half their Days, even what Nature might seem to promise, and they desired, and depended on.

Infamy.

It also exposes Reputation to Infamy. Which is Death to Credit, and oft proves as fatal as that of a Man's Person; necessitating to the longer Miseries of Life, which is but a kind of lingring and more uncomfortable Death. For, all kind of Injustice is base in the Opinion of all. Honest Men detest and

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and shun it, and even Knaves themselves are jealous of, and stand upon their Guard against it in each other. Hereby a Man becomes an Enemy to every one, and a shame to himself upon Discovery, which through the prying Jealousie of Men and Justice of God, is seldom long avoided, and as little spared or pitied thereupon. Therefore hath the wise Man observed to us, that *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely, but he that perverteth his ways, shall be known*: His Injustice will not only, by one Means or other be discovered, but the Discovery of it will be sure to render him very scandalous, that none will care to have to do with him, but all will mistrust, avoid and detest him. And should it happen otherwise, as rarely it does, that this should be escaped, or not mattered, or thought sufficiently recompenced by the Lucre that Injustice may have exchanged Reputation for; yet even here further, this Sin is to loss, in that also,

*It exposeth Estates to Ruin*: To which, loss of Credit is usually the first step; whereby Trade sinking, the means of getting more is prevented, and what was unjustly got, the sooner consumed. And God many times permits such to deal with dishonest Persons, as they have dealt with others; either by defrauding and circumventing them as Cheats, or by oppressing and plundering them as Enemies, or by sending such a Spend-thrift Heir to devour by Luxury what was got by Theft: God, in Way of Righteous Judgment, making one Sin the Vengeance of another: Which is exactly what is spoken from God by the Prophet Habakkuk. *Wo to him that increaseth that which is not his; how long? And to him that ladeth himself with thick lay. Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee?*

H

thee?



thee? And awake that shall vex thee? And thou shalt be for Booties unto them. Because thou hast spoiled many Nations, all the Remnant of the People shall spoil thee. But however, there seldom fails some secret withering Curse attending all unjust Gains; which like a Canker, eats out all the Profit therof, and rubs its Rust upon all it is added to; insensibly consuming the whole Substance, and leaving a Man much worse than it found him. As the

Jer. 17.  
11.

Partridge, observeth the Prophet Jeremiah, sitteth on Eggs, and hatcheth them not. So he that getteth Riches, and not by Right, shall leave them in the midst of his Days, and at his End, shall be a Fool.

Prov. 21.  
7.

And this the wise Man oft observes, That the Robbery of the Wicked shall destroy them. And, he

---22. 16.

that oppresseth the Poor to encrease his Riches, shall surely come to want. This is so Universal and Common an Observation, and of such strong Credit in the World, that all Men are both ready to prophesie Ruin, and short Continuance, to the Fortune that they see or think to be raised by Injustice; and whenever they perceive any Estate irrecoverably wasting, to conceive presently a jealousy of some ill means used in the getting of it. So that considering all together, Fraud or Injustice is as great an Error in politicks as in Morals, and plainly bespeaks a Man to have as little Wit as Honesty, and, in plain English, to be as much Fool as Knave. And even yet, further, supposing the best, and that which may sometime happen, that a Man should thrive and hold it by Injustice; yet will not even this make him happy herein, because his Sin, further,

Trouble of  
Mind.

Exposes Conscience to perpetual Trouble and Disorder. For, of all Sins, Injustice admits the least of either Excuse or Mitigation, being so much against

gainst natural Light, and so very visible, that none but are aware of its Guilt. And however some other Sins may be excused through Ignorance, and mitigated or connived at upon the Score of the natural Defects of the Understanding; this can admit of no Cloak or Extenuation, whereof Conscience always informs, and will, if hearkened to, complain. So that a Man can never take true Comfort in ill-gotten Wealth; every Mite whereof throws Guilt in his Face, and awakens some dire Reflections in his Mind; where his Frauds and Rapines appear to him like Spectres to affright and disturb him as long as he *lives*, and more so when he comes to *Die*, and most of all, after Death when call'd to *Judgment*.

*Life* is imbitter'd by nothing more than the Sense of unjust Actions, clinging so close to a Man's *Conscience*, that he can never stir the pain thence, without pulling away his Conscience therewith; since all his Enjoyments, that should be the Comfort of his Life, are the continual Remembrancers of his Guilt, that will deject his Soul, and in the midst of *Laughter* make his Heart *sad*. Whereas, what is gotten with a good Conscience in an honest Calling, whether it be more or less, it brings no Check or struggling of Mind, no regret or sting of Heart along with it; and a Man may, if he will himself, chearfully enjoy Content therewith, and entertain himself with the continual *Feast of a good Conscience*. Whence the wise *Man* wisely asserts, that *better is a little with Righteousness, than great Revenues without Right*. Which also his Father had observed before him, that *a little that a Righteous Man hath, is better than the Riches of many Wicked*. The Comfort of this Life not depending on the Quantity but

*In Life.*

Prov. 16:

8.

Pf. 37:16.

Quality of Enjoyments. So that Gains must be honest rather than great to procure a livelihood for a Man to subsist on with any true satisfaction. And it is, no doubt, a thousand times better to live contentedly on a brown Morsel, than to *sare deliciously every day* with a vexed and tormented Mind. And yet this commonly is the Fate of unjust Possessors; who (as one expresseth it) under the Disguise of a chearful Countenance, too commonly wear woful Hearts; and like Tragedies bound in gilded Covers, are only gay without, but full of Stabs and Wounds within. And though, in a continued Tumult of Excesses, such should make a shift, whilst they live, to drown the Cries of their guilty Consciences; yet, very probably,

*At Death.* *At Death*; when threatned by a Disease or Danger, that sets them within Ken of a Tribunal that will call them to a speedy Account, and not suffer them to be *any longer Stewards*, or to enjoy any further Opportunities of being *Unjust*; then their Conscience, in despite of them, will awake, and rouse, and raise hideous Out-cries against them. For now their very last Will and Testament will present them with a Catalogue of their uncancell'd Crimes; and every ill-gotten Penny there bequeathed, put them in mind of their approaching Damnation, dictating Horror to their uneasie Minds, which in a desperate Rage, will be ready to fly in their Faces, and tell them to their Teeth that they are Cheats and Knaves, and their Legacies the Fruits of their Sins, the Purchase of their Frauds and Oppressions, and that for what they are now bequeathing to others, they long ago bequeathed their Soul to the Devil. So that should any chance to thrive  
and

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and grow rich by Injustice, yet 'tis a thousand to one but either living or dying, or both, his Riches will disturb and plague him worse, than even the most dreaded Poverty. However, most assuredly,

*After Death and at Judgment*; when a strict *After Death.* Scrutiny shall be made, and such summon'd to an impartial Reckoning; how will all their sly Tricks and cunning Shifts of Injustice then stare them in the Face, and expose them, so as to leave no room for Apology, but force them to anticipate their Doom, and cry out guilty; and to approve and second it as soon as 'tis over with a *just and righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy ways!* And then too late will sadly be experienc'd and acknowledged the hard bargain of all the unjust Acquisitions made in this Life, incurring the Penalty of *Damnation* in the other Life. This is as much as can be said against any Sin: And is sufficient to dissuade from this, all that know or consider what that means.

Men are apt to think themselves very lucky, whenever they are but cunning enough to have over-reacht another; when as, God knows, all the while there is Another over-reaching them, and more cunning to cheat them of what is infinitely more precious, their Souls. And what will it ease such in Hell, that they have left Wealth behind them on Earth; while they will there want that which the meanest Beggar here enjoys, *even a Drop of Water to cool their parched Tongues?* So that they who hope for Heaven, must be upright and just. *Neither Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* Whom no Laws can re-<sup>10.</sup>



strain in their Gains of this World, God will deprive them of all Inheritance in the next World. And not to be content in the Enjoyment of God's Allotments here, will shut his Hand to us from affording any thing more of his kindness to us hereafter.

As therefore we would not provoke God, injure our Neighbour, and undo our selves, it concerns us to study and resolve upon exact Justice and Honesty in all our ways: And especially to *train up* our Children from the very first beginning thereto: Instilling betimes the Principles of Honesty into them; not indulging them in the least Injustice; much less encouraging and commanding them thereto. Which no Neediness ought to necessitate in any. For, Theft can be no relief to Poverty, being far the worse of the two Evils, because a sin and damning. Whereas a Man may be poor and yet innocent: But he that steals, though he never so much wants, may be pitied, but will not go unpunished. For if God hath given Ability, such ought by honest Industry to procure Necessaries; if not, they ought to implore the Charity and Benevolence of others, whose Hearts God will open to their Relief; resolving it to be far better to die in their Integrity, than to live by Sin. So that upon no Account nor in any Instance is Theft to be allowed of. But it is the Duty of all to depend upon the good Providence of God, and be content with the Portion allotted thereby; giving to every Man his due, and permitting him to enjoy it. And such being the *Nature* and *Ground* of this Commandment; we see for what Breaches of it we are to beg God's *Mercy upon us*, and in what Instances of Obedience

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ence to it we are necessitated to beg his Grace,  
to *incline our Hearts to keep this Law :*

*Which God vouchsafe us all, through the Merits of  
his Son our Saviour : To whom be Glory now  
and for ever, Amen!*

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H 4 SER.

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## S E R M O N XXX.

O N T H E

## Ninth Commandment.

Exod. xx. 16.

*Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.*

**T**H E *Life, Chastity and Goods*, of Man having been secured by the Sanction of the three preceding Precepts, God proceedeth to take Care of his *Reputation*, no less dear to him, in this, which prohibits *false Witness*. The *Nature and Ground*, whereof will be the Argument of our Disquisitions on this Commandment. And be it therefore considered,

*What it is  
to Bear  
false Wit-  
ness-*

I. *What it is to bear false Witness*, in order to animadvert on those Sins hereby prohibited, for avoiding the Guilt of transgressing this Commandment. By first explaining the Terms, and then considering the Matter therein contained.

1. *The Explanation of the Terms*, will not a little contribute towards the Understanding the full Extent of the import of this Precept; and there

therefore we shall particularly inquire into the meaning here of *Witness*, the *Falsity* of it, how it is *Born*, and when it may be said to be *against our Neighbour*.

The word *Witness*, in its Primary Sense, is a judicial Term, importing that Testimony which is given only in Courts of Judicature, for the Decision of Controversies between Man and Man, especially in matters of Capital or high Concernment. But, in a Secondary Sense, it is as oft used to import even all Extrajudicial Testimonies, which are Reports and Significations current among Men in matters Trivial, or of more common Concernment.

*The Falsity whereof*, in both Cases, consists in its Contrariety to the inward Sense of the Mind; when the Testimony given is no ways agreeable to the Conception, pretended to be thereby discovered, whether it be by Words or Actions; and which therefore is *the utterance of Untruth with an intent to deceive*, so that it is Falshood known and wilful that makes the *Witness false*; and as every Expression of an untruth is not a false *Witness*, so every Expression of Truth may not be a true *Witness*. For, Untruth uttered through a necessary want of Information, and without any Design or Desire to deceive, is a true Testimony, though a false thing in its self. And Truth spoken contrary to knowledge and out of an ill Intent, is a false Testimony, tho' a true thing in it self. And therefore, according to the first Observation, he doth not transgress this Law; who unwittingly mistakes Falshood for Truth, and speaketh as he thinketh; tho' he do think otherwise than as he ought to speak; or who intends Truth by Falshoods, used not to deceive but



but to instruct ; as is usual in Parables and figurative Speeches. And, according to the latter Observation, he doth transgress this Law, who reports a Truth which he himself believes to be false, with an intent to deceive ; or mis-represents, or Equivocates, or mentally reserves part thereof. A like Dissonancy between the mind and words, being in all these Instances, makes the Falsity the same in the Witness.

To *Bear which*, as it is also a judicial Term, so it primarily signifies to answer, being examined or adjured, in Judgment, as a Witness ; but in a Secondary and more lax Sense, it seems here to be intended also to import the having any thing, in any way, to do with Falsities to the prejudice of another ; according to the Explications of this Law, or that parallel Law, which we have in *Leviticus*, where it is said, *Thou shalt not go up and down as a Tale-bearer among the People ; neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy Neighbour.* So that any way to deal in false Reports, whether by *Raising* or *Receiving*, and *Propagating* them, to the prejudice of a Neighbour, falls within the Prohibition of *bearing false Witness* against him. For,

Lev. 19.  
16.

Then is the *Witness against him*, when it is either to the prejudice of *Truth* or *Ingenuity*, or *Equity*, to which every Man hath a natural Right from another, and cannot be defrauded in, but to his prejudice, and against his just Claim and Interest. And this being the Sense of the *Terms*,

2. *The Consideration of the matter contained in them*, will now fully inform us of the nature and extent of this Prohibition, as having relation to both *Judicial* and *Extrajudicial Falsities*. For,

I. *This*

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1. *This Commandment forbids us all Falsities in Judicial.*  
*any Court of Judicature* ; instituted for the Determination of Controversies, and endued with Authority to demand Testimonies for Truth; wherein all Persons concerned, are hereby obliged to have nothing to do with the Falsity of Witness, in whatever Degree or Manner they have relation to be concerned therein. And therefore hence it becomes the Duty of

1. The *Plaintiff*, who occasions the *Bearing* all *Witness* here, not to raise any false Accusation, neither to mix any Falshood with what he may accuse of truly, nor yet to prosecute even the most true one in any trifling Instances. For, if he accuseth falsely, he offends against Truth ; if he aggravates Truth by some Falshoods, or puts the worst Construction on things true, he offendeth against Ingenuity ; and if he prosecutes to extremity, upon every or any slight occasion, he offends against Equity. And in all these Instances his *Witness* is false against his Neighbour, and by thus bearing of it he offends in opposition to this Commandment. So, in like manner, it also hence becomes the Duty of

2. The *Defendant*, as to own justly imputed Crimes, without litigious prolonging of Suits, and retarding of Justice, and to agree with his *Adversary* whilst he is in the way ; so to refrain charging him with false Accusations, which is but too ordinary, by way of revenge to blast his Credit, and invalidate his Testimony whether true or false. For, as to deny a true Testimony, is to bear a false one, so to retaliate whether a true or false one with Calumnies, is much more so. For the preventing of both which faults in *Witnessing*, this Precept obligeth, either to an ingenuous  
Agree-

Agreement, or quiet Submission to a legal Determination, without the breach of that Love and Friendship which the Christian Constitution requires to be among us.

But because, though the *Plaintiff* and *Defendant* make the Cause, yet they leave it to the Learned in the Law to manage it, who become therefore concerned in the *Witness* born, and are oft tempted to prejudice the Truth of it, in Courts of Judicature; therefore it also hence becomes the Duty of

3. *Advocates*, as to reject the Defence of all Testimonies apparently false, so to concern themselves with all Simplicity, Fidelity, Diligence and Dispatch, in such as appear to them undoubtedly just and true. For to espouse any Cause, with a like eagerness to carry it, whether true or false, is to set Truth and Falshood upon equal Terms, and is as much to over-value the one, as to under-value the other; whereby in either way the Falshity of Witness is too much encouraged. But voluntarily to assist in the Testimony that is apparently untrue; and for a Fee, set it off to pass not only for, but against Truth, is surely to incur the Guilt of *bearing false Witness*, as much as he doth, whose the false Accusation is. For, the end of the Law is the Preservation of Truth; which as it ought never to be opposed, so nor stifled, nor unduly vindicated, never either wanting, or admitting indirect means for its support. But yet more directly, and according to the Letter of this Law, becomes it hence also the Duty of

4. *All Witnesses*, being legally called upon to bear their Testimony in Court, as to depose nothing that is false; so neither to conceal, nor transpose

transpose any thing that is true ; nor yet deliver it with any other degree of Assurance than they themselves are perswaded of, in their own Bosoms. For to depose what is false, is what literally this Command forbids, and of Guilt enough to deserve a particular Law to restrain it ; as procuring a false sentence, and offering violence to Justice, whereon the safety of mens Persons and Fortunes do depend. And to *Conceal* any thing that is true, where the whole Truth is required and necessary, as it may prove of as prejudicial a consequence to the Cause, so is it nevertheless a *false Witness*, Truth being no less destroy'd oft by Concealment, than by Falshood ; the want of a Circumstance quite altering the Nature of a thing in question. And so also to *Transpose* the Truth, since the good or evil of an Action may depend upon its Circumstances, a Confusion or Disorder therein, may as much disguise, and conceal, and alter it, as a Falshood can. And, finally, to assert a Truth with greater degrees of Assurance than we our selves are perswaded of it, as it manifests a Disagreement between our Words and our Estimate, so doth it render such Witnesses false ; and by leaving no room for Presumption, oft proves as prejudicial. So that it becomes hence the Duty of all such as are called upon, at any time, to be Witnesses in any Court of Judicature, to *bear* their *Witness* according to Truth, with that Frankness, Sincerity and Modesty, as may secure them from Falshood, and do Service to Truth, by which the Publick can alone be served. For which end, Lastly, it becomes hence no less the Duty of,

§. *All Judges* themselves, (whether of Fact or Right, being Jury or Judge) what in them lies to dis-



discover the Truth of Witnesses, and impartially to determine for it. *The Judges* neither receiving Informations before-hand, whereby their Judgments may be forestalled; much less suffering themselves to be blinded by the Intercession of Friends, the Solicitation of great Persons, or the receiving of Rewards; not suffering, what in them lies, either the Litigants or Advocates, the Freedom of personal Aspersions, that serve rather to hide than discover Truth: Examining such Witnesses as shew themselves Crafty, or reserved, withall Dexterity and Accuracy; helping out, and encouraging such, whom Bashfulness and the awe of so great a Presence deterr; bearing with the Impertinences of those of the meaner sort, unskill'd to relate, and tedious in giving information; and finally being careful and faithful to recapitulate, or sum up the whole matter, and with all Uprightness and Perspicuity to deliver the Sense of that Law which respecteth it. By doing whereof they will not only fulfil their own parts, and preserve themselves innocent from the *false Witness* prohibited in this Commandment, but in a great measure help the *Jury* to satisfy their parts to the same good Purpose; and who hence also are therefore concerned, in Reason and Law, to receive the sense of the Law from the Judge, and knowledge of the Fact from the Depositions of the respective Witnesses without Favour or Hatred, setting themselves to consider of all that hath been proposed, and impartially delivering their own Sense, that so they may at least free their own Souls. And though, even after all this, they may sometime happen to err in Judgment, yet will they not offend in Conscience, while they thus govern themselves by the best

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best Light, which the Evidence given, and the Dictates of their own Judgments have afforded them.

So abundantly careful hath God been, by this Commandment, to exclude all *false Witnesses* out of Courts of Judicature; being principally intended for the Regulation of Judgment; that Righteousness and Truth might be established among Men; and the Fountain thereof, being thus kept pure, might send it down in full Streams into our Streets, and Peace and Truth be in our Days. For so was intimated, that the Prohibition here extended also to

2. *Extrajudicial Falsities*; which will more easily be restrain'd when those in Courts, are totally suppressed. This Commandment forbidding all Disagreement between our Minds and Expressions, and obliging to Truth upon all Occasions, without abusing and mangling it one to another. So that the Sin Extrajudicially here forbid, is that most common one of *Lying*. Which is *bearing a Witness false* to our own Sentiments, or uttering a Falshood, either real or supposed, with an intent to deceive. And this is distinguishable into these three kinds of *Lyes*, viz. The *Jocular*, the *Officious*, and *Pernicious Lye*.

1. *The Jocular Lye*, is an Untruth framed to deceive the Hearer, only to excite mirth. Which, being different from those innocent and harmless Fictions that are in a Manner detected as soon as told, and which neither asperse Sincerity, nor wrong the Use of Speech; but such, as do injury to Truth, and Injustice to our Neighbour, is a direct breach of this Precept. For Truth is of that sacred and awful Nature as will not bear a Con-

Contradiction in Sport; the Reputation whereof ought to be regarded more than our own Diversion. And Justice to our Neighbour obligeth to such esteem for him, as cannot allow his Credulity to be imposed upon; nor to make a Jest of Deceit, which seems so inconsistent with that Simplicity of the *Dove*, described as the necessary Temper of a Christian, and moreover insnares in so many idle Words that must be accounted for, in Judgment. Wherefore we find God reckoning it up, as a Sin, against the *Israelites*, by one of his Prophets, That they made the King and Princes glad or merry with their Lyes.

Hof. 7. 3.

The Offici-  
ous Lye.

2. The *Officious Lye*, is an Untruth uttered for another's Benefit; whereby though it seems to make abundant Compensation, yet cannot be excused from Sin, since both a Lye is intrinsically Evil in its self, which no Advantage can recommend; and since Truth is of more Value and Import than whatever Profit; and especially since also the Scripture hath absolutely defined, that we must not do evil that good may come thereof, the

Rom. 3. 8.

*Damnation* of such as do so, being resolved by the *Apostle* to be just. And therefore however favourably these sorts of Lyes have been formerly spoken of both by Philosophers and some Christians; yet are they, upon such accounts universally now condemned by the best modern Casuists; and particularly by our Judiciously Learned Bishop *Sanderfon*, who in one of his Sermons *Ad Clerum* thus peremptorily, to the Case in hand, delivers himself. We know not, saith he, any greater Good (for there is not any greater Good) than the Glory of God: We scarce know a lesser Sin (if any Sin may be accounted little) than an harmless *Officious Lye*. Yet may not this be done; no not for that

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that. Wilt thou speak wickedly for God, and Joh. 13.7. talk deceitfully for him? If not for the Glory of God; then certainly not for any other inferior End: Not for the saving of a Life, Not for the Conversion of a Soul, Not for the Peace of a Church, and (if even that were possible too) not for the Redemption of a World. No intention of any End, can warrant the Choice of sinful means to compass it. In fine; much more is by this Commandment prohibited as universally unlawful.

3. *The Pernicious Lye*: which is an Untruth invented on purpose for the hurt and damage of our Neighbour. And, as being the worst and most heinous sort of all Lyes, hath never yet met with Advocate, enough degenerate to, offer any thing to excuse or extenuate its Evil. And this, with respect to its Manner and Circumstance, is distinguishable into that which is *Censorious, Slandrous, Detractive, Adulatory and Treacherous.*

1. *A Pernicious Censorious Lye*, is when we Pragmatically and Enviously pry after, and catch at any the least shadow of a Fault, and upon meer Presumption, exaggerate, insult over, and condemn it over hastily, and rigorously in another. This is a *Witness*, we have no Right in such a manner, to bear against any one who is not subject to our Jurisdiction, but is lyable to render account at another Bar. And we are commanded to judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come. 1 Cor. 4. And this finally, is inconsistent with Christian Charity, which obligeth all to be gentle, meek, patient and merciful, Seeking no Evil, Covering all things, Bearing all things. And therefore it must needs be false so far as it is censoriously borne, and offend against Truth, inasmuch as it is inconsistent with Charity, which Truth enjoys.



And is absolutely against the intent of this Law, and therefore is with all Carefulness to be either avoided or amended by us. Accordingly we are taught by St. Paul, when he says, *Who art thou that judgest another Man's Servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth.* And St. James, in like manner, and upon the same ground expostulateth with the Censorious, saying, *There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save, or to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?* Our Lord himself for this reason declined intermeddling in the Affairs of particular Men; *Who*, saith he, *made me a Judge or Divider over you?* No Man having to do to pass Sentence upon another's Actions, unless delegated thereto by Law, or Nature, or Duty for God's Glory, and the publick Good, without belying them in prejudice of Truth, and Violation of this Precept which obligeth on the contrary, to all Candour and Fidelity towards the Reputation and Interest of one another.

Slanderous.

2. *There is also a Pernicious slanderous Lye.* Which is a false imputation of some Vice to our Neighbour, which he deserveth not from us. And which, if done openly and avowedly to his face, is then distinguished by the name of *Evil-speaking*; whereof they are guilty who Revile and Rail at one another in Wrath and Ill-will. If Clandestinely and in Private, then is it properly called *Back-biting, Whispering, or Tale-bearing*; whereof such are guilty who raise, or take up, and encourage, and spread abroad false and scandalous Rumours, or indeed any Report of one another, without reasonable warrant, apparent just Cause, necessary Reason, beyond measure, out of bad Principles, or for bad Ends. The which, likewise is a *Witness* as always *False* in its self, so very in.

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injurious in its Effect against our Neighbour : Even always to his Grief and Vexation, oft to his Disparagement and degrading in the World, and sometimes to the incapacitating him to do good either to the Souls or Bodies of other Men, and Directly against the Intention of this Law. In Conformity whereto it is St. Paul's express Command to Christians, viz. *Let all Bitterness and Eph. 4. Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-speak- 31, 32. ing be put away from you with all Malice : And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* And, cautioning the Corinthians against this Sin, he saith, *I fear lest when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, lest there be among you De- 2Cor. 12. bates, Envyings, Strifes, Back-bitings, Whisperings, Tumults.* And he reckons it up among the black Catalogue of Crimes, for the which God gave up the Heathen to a reprobate Mind, to do things which are not convenient ; being filled with all unrighteous- Rom. 1. ness, full of Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malig- 29, 30. nity, Whisperers, Back-biters, Despightful inventers of Evil things. No man, surely, had need to be represented worse than he deserves, since the best deserves so ill. Neither are any of us so devoid of Faults our selves, as that we should have the heart to impute false ones to others. Much rather ought we, in obedience to the Affirmative part of this Commandment, to be very tender of one another's little Repute ; and pity the too many Blemishes, unavoidably fullying it too much in the best. Doing all we can to lessen and reform them which are not to be exposed but with Pity, or aggravated but with Sin.

3. *There is further, a Pernicious detraactive Lye. Detra-*  
*And, as the Slanderous one imputeth Faults un- five:*

deservedly, so this Detraeth from deserved Commendation. Representing our Neighbour's *Person*, or his *Actions* under the most disadvantageous Circumstances, setting out those which may cause him to appear odious or despicable, and slipping over those which would commend or excuse him. Mis-construing ambiguous words, or mis-interpreting doubtful things. Mis-naming the Qualities of Persons or Things; assigning bad Appellations or Epithets to things good or indifferent. Imperfectly Characterizing, so as studiously to veil, or faintly to disclose Virtues and good Qualities, but carefully to expose and aggravate, or amplify any supposed or real Defects or Failings in another. Interposing Exceptions in all Commendations, but ever discommending absolutely. Suggesting ill Causes and Principles, latent in the Heart, of Practices apparently good; allowing nothing to be so well without pretending to correct and shew how it might have been better. In a word; injecting Suggestions of every thing any wise plausible, or possible that can serve to diminish the worth of a Person, or value of an Action we would discountenance; prying into every Nook, sifting every Circumstance, improving every Pretence, alledging any Report or Rumour, using all the Tricks imaginable to that end. Which is a *bearing a false Witness* proceeding from the worst of Nature, a sower Humour, Pride, Envy, Malicious Spight, evil Conscience, and selfish Designs, and tending to the greatest Injustice, in spoiling our Neighbour of his best Good and Reward, his Vertue and his Reputation, to the Discouragement and hindrance of Religion, to the Provocation of God whose it is, and to the ruin of all Society, to which it is  
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so serviceable and necessary, in Opposition to the Authority of this Law prohibiting it. And therefore on the other hand, it obliges also to Delight in one another's Good, and to tender the Interest and Honour of each other as our own: By all means, cherishing and countenancing Vertue in one another; rejoycing in the good Qualities, and worthy Deeds of any, whereby our common Father is glorified, our common Profession graced, and the common Body whereof we are Members, edified; yielding hearty Esteem, paying due Respect, gladly Congratulating one another for any thing commendable. Which even Equity, Ingenuity, Charity and Piety do all concurrently make due; and from which to detract is therefore to *bear false Witness against our Neighbour.*

4. *There is, moreover, a Pernicious Lye that is A-Adulatory.* Which is the quite opposite Extream to ry. the other, as all are opposite to Truth and Charity. And this is, when Men sooth and flatter, by either an inordinate extolling of Virtues; or, which is worse, by a wicked Commendation of even Vices in another; or, which is yet most common, by pretending to that Kindness and esteem for Persons, which in truth, either they have not, or not to that Degree, which their Expressions seem and are intended to import. Which, as it is evidently *a false Witness* in its self, so doth it proceed from a false Principle, and tends to a wrong end, against the Interest, and to the great prejudice of our Neighbour: Lulling him into Security; abusing him into a vain and foolish Opinion of himself, and an ill-grounded Confidence that will endanger his Soul; the Blood of which, God, who hath threatned to *cut off all*  
I 3 *flattering*



Pf. 12. 3. *flattering Lips*, will be sure to require at the Flatterer's hands.

*Treacher-  
7021.*

5. *The last sort of Pernicious Lyes, mention'd, is the Treacherous Lye.* Which is when Men Promise what they never purpose; or when they never perform what they promise. For, a promise is the *Witness* of Consent: Which, if made, by those who are of Capacity to understand what they consent to, and make a sensible Declaration of it; and about what it is lawful for them to make a Promise; and without mistake or constraint; in such case and in such manner, being made with Intent and purpose to perform it, if not performed, when in their Power, and without considerable Alteration of Circumstances, it will necessarily be a *false Witness* against the Purport of this Law; which prohibits all Falsification of our Words, either of Promise or Compacts, which cannot be without Disappointment, Grief or Prejudice to our Neighbour, and enjoyning Sincerity, and Faithfulness even to our own wrong rather than Violation of Truth.

Such is the import of this Command, with respect to our *Witness* both Judicial and Extrajudicial; charging us with a strict Observation of Truth in all our Conversation. Which is so just and necessary in its self, that as it vindicates, so it now minds us, as was propos'd, to illustrate,

*The Sin  
fulness of  
false Wit-  
nessing.*

II. *The Grounds and Reasonableness of this Prohibition.* And therather, because its Transgression is so very common, and hath fewer Checks upon it than other bad Practice hath. Many Men who boggle much at the Commission of other Sins, make little scruple of this. Insomuch that one may observe many Persons, in all other parts

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of Morality, rigorously Sober, often in this, very wild and dissolute; indulging to themselves a strange Licentiousness in speaking whatever their Humour or their Passion dictates, seeming to have said with those mention'd by the Psalmist, with our tongue will we prevail, our lips are our own; who is Lord over us? And yet is the restraint no less upon this, than any other Sin; and this Law against it, Enacted upon as solid Ground and weighty Reasons, For,

1. To bear false Witness in any kind against our Neighbour; is quite opposite to the Nature and Mind of God, whom to follow, or imitate, as dear Children, is both our Duty and Happiness; who is the God of Truth, and loveth and practiseth it in all his doings, and abominateth Falshood. All the paths of the Lord are Mercy and Truth, unto such as keep his Covenant and his Testimonies, singeth the Psalmist. And one of the Principal things, God is observed especially to hate, is reckoned by Solomon to be a Lying Tongue; who also tells us, that Lying Lips are an abomination unto the Lord. And therefore have we so many express Commands given us against this Sin. Under the Law it was enjoyn'd, Ye shall not deal falsely, nor lye one to another. And, Under the Gospel, it is repeated, Lye not one to another. Wherefore putting away Lying, speak every man truth to his Neighbour. And again, lay aside all Malice, and all Guile, and Hypocrisies, and Envies, and Evil-speakings. So that nothing appears more distant from, and contrary to God than Falshood, whom we can neither resemble nor please, without a most strict observance of Truth; and more especially when the Witness born is Judiciary; whereto an Oath being usually annexed, that calleth the God of

Psal. 12.

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Opposite to God.

Eph. 5. 1.

Deut. 32.

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Psal. 25.

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Prov. 6.

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---12. 22.

Lev. 19.

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Col. 3. 9.

Eph. 4. 25.

1Pet. 2. 1.

Truth, to attest the Truth and Sincerity of it, yet further strengthens the Obligation to Truth; and highly aggravates the Sin of *Falshood* against him therein. So that in no case may Conformity to God, be maintain'd, but by a firm adherence unto Truth. Yea,

*Abandons* 2. To bear false Witness resembles and abandons to the De- us to the Devil, who is a Liar, and the Father of vil.

Jo. 8. 44. it. And therefore Falshood is not more opposite to the Nature, and mind of God, than it is conformable to that of the Devil; between whom the whole World is divided; and the Division manifested by this Sin. And therefore observable is that of *Isaiah*, by whom God speaking saith,

Isa. 63. 8. Surely they are my People, Children that will not Lye, plainly implying that as Truth entitles God to us, so Lying evidenceth Men to be the Devils Children, to whom all that practise Falshood necessarily belong: This being the very Sin, he made his grand Triumph in, over deluded Mankind; that was peculiarly his own contrivance. That gave him the advantage he hath got over fallen Mortals; wherein Men follow his steps; Lift themselves under his Banner; yield to his Authority, to be guided and actuated by him, to imitate, serve, and please him, and declare to whom they belong, by a Practice he alone is famed for. So that this Sin is purely *Diabolical*; and St. Peter spoke not without great Propriety, when he said to *Ananias*, Why hath Satan filled thine heart to Lye? as if perceiving his contrivance

A. 5. 3. in the Performance. And therefore our Lord had said, When he speaketh a Lye, he speaketh of his own. There being such a peculiar Property belonging to the Devil in every Falshood, that (as one expresseth it) there is ever so much of the Devil, as there is of a Lye. Moreover,

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3. *To bear false Witness is a wrong to Mankind. A wrong*  
And especially in these four Particulars. 1. *It to Man-*  
*violates Man's natural Right*; by wronging and *kind.*  
destroying *Truth*, which every one hath a Right  
to challenge from his Neighbour, so as to know  
the true Sense of each others Minds and Inten-  
tions, whensoever it is pretended to report and  
discover them. 2. *It injureth Reputation.* As it  
exposes the Credulity of men to Scorn; and is de-  
signed to represent them otherwise, than they ei-  
ther are or deserve, to blast or sully their good  
Name, being the dearest of Possessions, and the  
Reward of Vertue, a wrong herein therefore op-  
posing both their Fortune and Worth. 3. *It ha-*  
*zards Innocency*; being the grand Instrument of  
all Sin; to which both the Rise and Growth there-  
of is mostly owing. Deceit is of the very Essence  
and Nature of Sin. And there is no sinful Action, *Dr. South.*  
as a Learned Divine tells us, but there is Fal-  
shood wrapt up in the Bowels of it. Besides,  
that it is so contrary to the Sincerity and Sim-  
plicity of the Gospel, which cannot possibly unite  
with Guile, pre-possessing its room, and which  
must be banish'd, before Men will be disposed for  
Religion, that alone can either recover or guard  
Innocency. And no wonder, than, if we add  
that, 4. *It directly tends to dissolve all human So-*  
*ciety*; whereof Truth and Integrity is the only  
Bond, And Men that cannot be believed and  
trusted, neither are they fit to be conversed with;  
because there will be perpetual Suspicions and  
Surmisings, Doubts and Jealousies, which by  
sowing the minds of Men, stop the common In-  
ter-course of the World, and make Men divide,  
and stand upon their Guard, with their hand  
against every one, and every ones hand against  
them.



them. Whence it is, that most of the Disturbances and Quarrels among men, are only the effects of Insincerity and false Witness-bearing, not suffering Men to live quietly together, because it destroys that Confidence in each other that can alone unite them. So injurious therefore to others is every *false Witness*, that whenever it is born, it must necessarily be said to be (as it is in this Commandment) *against our Neighbour*. Yea, to conclude,

*Reflects on a Man's self.* 4. *It is a foul Reflection on a Man's self*; as both proceeding from bad Principles, and tending to bad Consequents.

*Proceeding from bad Principles.* 1. *The bad Principles it proceedeth from*, are Principally these two, great *Uncharitableness*, and base *Pusillanimity*: *Ill-will* or *Fear* being the Parent of all *Falshood*. It being evermore contrived, either to hurt another, or to save our selves. Whence *Solomon* observeth that *Hatred is covered by Deceit*; and therefore, that a *Lying Tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it*, and that a *Man that beareth false Witness against his Neighbour, is a Maul, and a Sword, and a sharp Arrow*, even every thing to destroy, and over-power another unfairly, through cowardly Diffidence in a fair way.

*Prov. 26. 26, 28.* 2. *The bad Consequents of this Sin*, are the certain Loss of both *Good-name*, and *Good-will*.

*Tending to ill Consequents. To good Name.* 1. *Good-name* can be preserved only by *Sincerity*. *Honour and Truth* always stand and fall together. Whereof all Men are naturally so sensible, that sometimes not to falsifie their Word, they have unwillingly perpetrated the most ungrateful Iniquity, as did *Herod for his Oaths sake*, when he beheaded *St. John the Baptist*; or when charged with that Guilt, to wash out the blot, they have thought

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thought nothing sufficient but the Blood of their Accuser, for it? The Charge of Falshood being look'd on as the vilest reproach; rendring a Man contemptible and forlorn, useles and unfit for any thing. For, they whom no body may believe or trust, can be fit for neither Counsel nor Friendship, for Service or Command, to be in Office or in Honour; but like *Salt that hath lost its Savour*, is fit only to be cast out and perish on a *Dunghil*.

2. And so for *Good-Will and Love*, nothing forfeits it more and sooner than Falshood; and that both from *Man and God*. *To Good-Will.*

1. To bear a *false Witness* forfeits all *Good-Will* *From* *from Men*: Who both detest, and think themselves authorized to retaliate the Practice; and therefore it renders a Man both *Hated* and *Persecuted*. *Man.*

1. It renders a Man *Hated*; not only for the Deformity of the Vice, but for the Mischief it effects: It incapacitating for Friendship, and justly forfeiting all Right to any Expression of it. So that, although a Christian can lawfully hate no one, yet may some worthily deserve to be hated. And, of all Men, he that either hath or would have deceived, certainly deserves it most; and what he deserves he may rightly receive, if not in his Person, yet in his Practice, which, being hateful, renders the Sinner hated, though the Man is to be pity'd and pray'd for. For, as the Devil is both a *Liar himself*, and the *Father of Lyars*, so the same Cause that hath drawn the Hatred of God upon the Father, may justly entail it from Man also, upon his Off-spring too. And therefore, God seems to have mark'd such *Wretches*; that it is generally observed, that *Lyars*

Lyars and Knaves have not usually the Look of other Men; so that by exactly observing their Persons, one can hardly fail to spy something to warn, before such can make their approach to betray. And therefore also,

*Persecution.*

2. This Sin exposes such also to be *Persecuted*; whereby others are ever greatly provoked, and also think themselves sufficiently authorized to retaliate the Provocation. For, nothing enflames the wrath of Men, stirreth up their Enmity, and maintains lasting Hatred and Spite more than to have *false Witnesses born against them*. And by whom Men are so vex'd, they will in requital be generally as ready, by finding or making Faults, to vex them again; not only their Care being engaged, their Industry quickned, and their Invention whetted hereby, to observe or devise matter of Recrimination; but also their Judgment bribed to think it not lawful only, but even needful in their own Defence, to disparage the Lyar, that his Report may have the less weight to their Prejudice. So that it will infallibly come upon them as our Lord warneth, to dissuade from

*Mat. 7.2.*

the Practice, that *with what Judgment we judge, we shall be judged; and with what Measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again*. And it is the known fate of common Lyars, to be most belyed: *Hatred* turning every ones heart, and *Revenge* opening every ones mouth against such; for whom there can be no Good-will among Men.

*From God.*

2. But, which is infinitely worse, *Bearing false Witness* forfeits also *Good-will and Favour from God*; who will not fail both to *Punish* in this, and *Dann* in the next Life for it.

*Punishments.*

1. The Punishments of God for this Sin, are very signal even *in this Life*; and particularly in these

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these two Instances thereof; even the *Discovery* and *smart* of it.

1. *It is a Sin that God seldom fails to detect and Discovery frustrate*; who hath such a peculiar Care over Innocency, as never hardly to abandon it to suffer finally by any Falshood. *The good Man's righteousness, the Psalmist observes, God will bring forth* Pf. 376. *as the Light, and his Judgment as the Noon-day.* The Detractor's Memory he suffers either to fail, or their Witness and Reports so to interfere, as to make them their own Betrayers. Insomuch, that all wise Men easily will discern the Foul-play to condemn it: Good Men will be ever ready to clear and vindicate Truth. Worth, however clouded for a time, will break through all Mists, and gloriously expand and shew its self, to the Shame and Confusion of its most formidable Opposers, so true is that of the wise Man, *Lying Lips are but for a moment.* Their Credit is soon blasted. A little time will wear off their false Colours, whereby they fall into perpetual Contempt; and being known to have been accustomed to Lying, shall not be believed when they speak Truth.

2. *It is a Sin, moreover, that God seldom fails to Smart.* *inflict some severe temporal Judgment for*: Oft making it, as the occasion of much Evil to others, so of great Calamity to the Person guilty thereof. Insomuch, that it hath been rationally enough observed, that no sad Disaster ever yet befall any Person or People; neither hath there ever been any Villainy or Flagitious Action yet committed, but upon a due Enquiry into the Causes of it, it hath been found, that *Falshood* was first or last the principal Engine to effect it. It was Pretence and Disguise brought it on, whatever other Evil Principle did execute it. And as God, who  
*sees*



sees the hidden works or darkness, seldom fails to manifest them by his Judgments ; and as none are more hid from Men than all kinds of Falshoods, so are none usually more signally manifested and exposed by God, so as to magnifie as his Omniscience in the Discovery, so his Truth and Justice in the Punishment thereof. All kinds of Lyars commonly living to be convinced of their Folly to their Sorrow ; being ever in Fear before Discovery, and always in Disgrace and Grief after it. According to that true Observation of Solomon's ; a false Witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh Lyes, shall not escape, i. e. as the ninth Verse, where the same words are repeated, explains it, *He shall perish* ? His Falshood will return upon him, so that he shall not escape his share in the Calamities it pulls down. Or however, such may happen to escape at present, so as to be neither discovered nor chastised for their Falseness in this Life ; yet, which is worst of all,

Damnation.

3. *Damnation* is certainly allotted for its Portion in the next Life. For, the God of Truth can never be supposed to assume to himself any that have addicted themselves to a perfidious Falshood which he abominates. *Who shall ascend into the holy Hell?* saith the Psalmist ; to which the Reply is, *He that worketh Righteousness, and that speaketh the Truth from his Heart.* And therefore it is, elsewhere said, that without are Dogs and Sorcerers ----- and whatsoever loveth and maketh a Lye. And again, that all Lyars shall have their part in the Lake which burns with Fire and Brimstone. So that the worst of Punishment, with the vilest of Sins, is its due in the next Life, however it may escape in this.

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All which things, seriously laid together and considered, will surely convince of the Vileness of the Sin, and Reasonableness of the Commandment forbidding it; engaging to exact Truth in all the *Witness* born by us, in Conformity to the Divine Nature, the good of our Neighbour, and the Interest of our selves, both in this World and the other.

*The which God, of his Mercy, give all Grace duely to Practise, for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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## S E R M O N XXXI.

O N T H E

## Tenth Commandment.

Exod. xx. 17.

*Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House;  
thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife;  
nor his Man-servant, nor his Maid-servant;  
nor his Oxe, nor his Ass; nor any thing that  
is thy Neighbour's:*

**T**HIS, as it is the last Commandment, so is it reckoned the Principal of all the Second Table Duties which respect our Neighbour. It being the Security and Guard thereof, by restraining in the very *Design*, what the Four preceding Commandments prohibit, expressly, only in Deed. The *Nature* and *Ground* whereof, together with the *Method* and *Means* of observing it, being so worthy of our Care and Endeavours, I now come to consider, in order to explain, what this Precept imports; why it obligeth, and how it may be observed and fulfilled. Accordingly, inquire we

I. *What*

I. *What it is, to covet our Neighbour's House, &c.* <sup>*What it is to covet, &c.*</sup>  
 which this Commandment forbids us. For which  
 end, we may distinguish herein both the *Object*  
 and the *Act* thereof.

*The Object*, which is here forbid us to *covet*, is very remarkably expressed by a particular Enumeration, and by a general and comprehensive Term. In the *particular Enumeration*, we have *House, Wife, Man-servant, Maid-servant, Ox, and Ass*, which some reduce to *Utile* and *Jucundum*. [Things profitable and Things pleasant.] And others refer them to the several Commandments of this second Table foregoing, whereto this is added for Supplement and Perfection. Herein beginning first with that which was last mentioned, and so backward to the other Commandments. And therefore it is said, *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House*, which is purely his Possessions, by designing to *bear false witness against him*, or to *steal from him*. *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife*, by designing to *commit Adultery*, and to abuse her if opportunity served. *Nor his Man-servant, nor his Maid-servant, nor his Oxe, nor his Ass*; which are his principal Enjoyments; omitting to express the thirsting after another's Life, because supposed here to be unlawful, where less than that is forbidden; and included however in the *General comprehensive Term*, *any thing that is thy Neighbour's*; which leaveth nothing excluded, that of right belongeth to him, and not to us. The greatness or smallness of the thing coveted making no more difference as to the Nature of the Desire, than the same greatness or smallness of a thing stolen doth in the Nature of the Theft, but only as to the Aggravation and Punishment of it. That which is not ours, but is

K ano.



anothers, must not be the Object of our *coveting*, whatever that be. Therefore

The *Act*, which is to *covet*, appears evidently to require every Man to rest fully satisfied with that Portion of outward things which God hath been pleased by fair and justifiable ways, in his good Providence, to derive upon him, without any inordinate desire of that which is anothers. So that the Sin here prohibited is to be distinguished both by the *Object* and the *Desire*.

*In respect to the Object*; this Prohibition restrains all Desires extending to such things as are not *alienable*; such is a Man's *Wife*, which the Commandment instanteth in. Or such things as are not *voluntarily* so; which our Neighbour hath no mind to part with, nor will be induced to yield his Consent to, which is necessary in every mutation of Property. Or, finally, such things as are not *convenient and equitable* for him to part with, because to his great Disadvantage and Prejudice. On any of which Terms to desire what is anothers, is sinfully to *covet*.

*In respect to the Desire*; the Prohibition here, as it must be restrained to only *Desire*, so must it be extended to only the *Inordinacy* thereof. For, being restrained to Desire, the Sin is confined to the Heart, which proceeding further, falleth strictly under some of the other Commandments. So that this last Commandment cometh more within us, condemning every inordinate Desire of what is not ours, although we have no actual Intention to make it ours by any unlawful, either violent or fraudulent Means, whereby we should come within the Compass of the Eighth Commandment, *viz. Thou shalt not steal*; which, as our Saviour hath interpreted of *Murder* and *Adultery*, reacheth

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to the very Intention of the Heart also. And therefore the bare wishing here in our Hearts, that what is our Neighbours were ours, his *Wife, House, Servant, Beast*, or his *any thing* ours, without considering whether he *can*, or be *willing*, or it be *meet* for him to part with it or no, is a direct Breach of this Holy Law of God, and flatly opposite to that true Contentment hereby enjoyed us,

But then also this we must extend to the *Inordinacy of our Desires*. For barely to desire what is anothers, is both natural and necessary. As soon may Light not shine, or the Fire not burn, as the Representation of a good that we have not, and may have from another, not excite Desire in us to have it. Neither is it any thing but this, that is the Foundation of all that Commerce which is among Men, so necessary and advantageous for Society in their Bargains of Buying and Selling, of Begging and Borrowing; and which is the Spring of Industry, and of all noble and generous Actions, and is every way consistent with, and conducing to the Welfare and Advantage of one another. And therefore it is not the *Desire*, but the *Inordinacy* only of the Desire that falls here under the Prohibition of this Commandment.

Some things there are that are our Neighbour's, which we are not to *desire at all*. And every *Desire* that makes such its Object is therefore *Inordinate* with respect thereto, however moderate in it self. And even such things of our Neighbours which we may desire, because he hath a Right to dispose of them, and is willing so to do, and it may be for his Advantage, yet are we not at liberty to extend our Desires after them to any

inordinate Degree, so as to be restless till we have them, and discontented if we have them not; because this is also inconsistent with that Satisfaction and well-pleasedness of Mind with our own present Circumstances, so as to be content with what we ourselves have, and that every one else should enjoy what is theirs, though we have it not?

1 King.  
21. 1. &c.  
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Serm. 1.  
Sect. 17.

And herein is judged to consist the Sin of *Ahab* (by which Instance is aptly illustrated the Nature of this Sin) in *coveting the Vineyard of Naboth*, even before he proceeded to take it and his Life from him. For it appears not that he, at first, had any settled Purpose, or resolved Design to wrest that Possession from its owner by Violence, or to weary him out of it by unjust Vexations. But he offered fair Terms, either by way of Purchase or Exchange, in reasonable Proposals. But yet *Ahab's* Sin was against this Precept, in that he could not rest himself satisfied with all his own Abundance, but set his Mind on his Neighbour's Plot; and unless he might have that too, lying so conveniently for him, he could not be at quiet, nor enjoy any longer his own; but desired what was his, because he had not what was another's.

Such is the *coveting*, then, forbid by this Commandment; wherein also are implied all those Sins proceeding hence, of *Envy, Ambition, Greediness, Niggardiness, Murmuring, Injustice, Uncharitableness*, and *Impatience* under worldly Losses: All, and every one of which Vices discovering an *Inordinacy of Desire* that doth principle them, derives Guilt from the Breach of this Law, though at the same time transgressing against some of the other Laws of the Decalogue. For it is not like

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ly that there can be satisfaction, where any of these Sins are discoverable ; all of which proceed from some distast at the present Dispensation of Circumstances ; we either being not pleased with what we have, or wanting that we have not, and another hath.

II. *The Grounds and Reasonableness of prohibiting which Sin*, will abundantly appear from the Consideration thereof in this Four-fold respect ; even in respect to *God*, in respect to *Our-selves*, in respect to our *Enjoyments*, and in respect to the Sin it self of *coveting*. Inasmuch, that if we either regard *God*, who orders both to us and our Neighbour the things that are ours and his ; or *Our-selves*, who are portioned by him ; or the *Enjoyments* allotted, which are fittest for us, or finally, the *Satisfaction* enjoined us to take in them, and the Nature of that Discontent forbid us, we shall be forced to acknowledge it both a most reasonable and merciful Prohibition to *covet what is anothers*, and Injunction to be *content with what we have of our own* ; which is the Import of this Commandment both as to the Negative and Positive Part of it. For,

*The sinfulness of coveting.*

1. *In regard to God*, it must be considered, That

1. *It is from him the things allotted us, come*, who over-rules both Choice and Chance, and gives to every one such a Portion as he pleaseth himself, who are all his own Creatures, and obliged to stand to his Allowance, neither to be directed nor blamed in what he doth by any. For,

*In regard to God, who is the Disposer of all.*

2. *God is absolute in his Disposals* ; and his Sovereign Authority may warrant him to give and take away without any Injustice or Wrong ; even where and when, and what he pleaseth : For

*Absolute.*



as God is a free Agent, and may act as he pleaseth, so he is the sole Proprietor, and can wrongfully detain from none, because all Original Right is in himself. *It being therefore the Lord, it is but*

1 Sam. 3. meet for Man to submit to *let him do*, in all Cases, *whatsoever seemeth him good*. And *we*, saith

Isa. 45. 9. the Prophet, *to him that striveth with his Maker: let the Potsherd strive with the Potshards of the Earth: Shall the Clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?* Besides,

Wife.

3. *God is of Infinite Knowledge and Wisdom*: Knowing better than we our selves what Circumstances of Condition are fittest for us. To his Skill and Prudence we ought securely to confide, and with Confidence wait the Issue; which, at the worst, would have been much worse had it been left to our own Management, and cannot possibly be amiss, or otherwise than just as it should be, because ordered by God, who is liable to neither Over-sight nor Forgetfulness, and only knows how it should be. And therefore, however his

Rom. 11. Dealings may be unaccountable, and *his ways* past 33. our *finding out*; yet are all his Dispensations to be acceptable to us, and to be looked on respectfully by us, because the Effects of an unquestionable Wisdom that *doth all things well*, and are not to be mended, much less censured by us. Yea,

Good.

4. *God is of immutable and boundless Goodness*, and will do nothing to our Prejudice, and from whom nothing can justly be ever taken ill by us. All we have cometh from his pure Bounty. None but enjoy from him, Blessings incomparably precious and excellent. We receive nothing from him, but out of Good Will, and designed for our good

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good. And therefore 'tis but reason we should contentedly acquiesce in whatever present Circumstances, with thankfulness for what we already have, without craving more, or complaining for very trifle we want, since he is well affected to us, and more truly loveth us than we do our selves. To whom thus looking up we cannot but see our selves bound to God in Piety, in Justice, in Gratitude, in Reason, to resent all things well, and be content with our own, without coveting any of our Neighbour's Portion.

2. *In regard also to Our-selves*, it will no less *In regard to our selves, who are* appear becoming such as we are, to rest satisfied with the Allotment of Divine Providence, and be restrained from desiring what is another's, or from repining at what is our own. For,

1. *We are God's own Creatures.* And we may be *Creatures.* sure that he who hath given us a Being, will order us a Maintenance; and for this we may be glad, and should be thankful; because it is what without him we could not help our selves to; and is purely of his Courtesie and Bounty. To mistrust thus much, would be to esteem our selves the Products of Chance: And to quarrel at it would be to forget that we are Creatures, and not our own Creators to carve for our selves. But,

2. *We are also Men:* Which is a Mercy and *Men.* Dignity of Nature abundantly recompencing for any Deficiencies of Fortune whatever, furnishing with Reason to prevent wants what we can, to remove them if it may be, or however to allay and mitigate them by bearing them if we can do neither. Without which Use and Privilege of Reason, the Condition of Men would be really worse than that of Brutes; inasmuch as they are made capable to descry the Causes of Trouble,

only to create and foment Disquiet, which the others being incapable of, are free from. So that it is human and rational to bear our own Lot easily, and to be content therewith, without letting out our Desires, to bewilder and disturb us, to *covet* beyond it. For again,

*But Men.*

Job 5. 7.

3. *We are but Men*: Dependent and offending Beings, and therefore *born unto trouble*, as the *Sparks fly upwards*: Necessitated to take the Incumbrances together with the Advantages of our Nature; having no reason to expect to have things always as we would; being sure to meet with want in the fullest State, and to fall short of Desire in the very highest Attainments. So that if we will be discontented, because we have not what we would have, and *covet* what we want; why do we not complain that we are made Men? whose Happiness is not in this World; and whose Miseries can be rendred tolerable only by restraining, not fulfilling his Desires. For, yet further, and which is worse,

*Sinners.*

4. *We are Sinners*; for whom any Allotment is good enough, and better than can be deserved by us; and upon which Account we surely have less reason to challenge ought, or to complain of any thing. It can, by no means, become us ever to complain of God's dealing with us, or to crave and muriny for more than he is pleased to vouchsafe us; who are daily forfeiting what we already have had from him, by our Enmity towards him, and Provocations of him. If we must be displeased, and lust to complain, we have reason much rather to accuse our selves, and *covet* to amend, than to exclaim against Providence or De-

Jer. 5. 25.

fire from others: It being our *Sins that only withhold good things from us*. So that the wanting our

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our Desires, are owing to our Deficiencies of Duty ; and *coveting* more is made unreasonable, by our *meriting* less, than we have. And especially, since, though *Sinners*,

5. *We are yet living Men* : Whereas the wages *Living of Sin is Death* ; and wherefore, as the Prophet *Men.* *Jeremiah* expostulates, *doth a living Man complain ?* Rom. 6. It not becoming any, who are yet indulged so <sup>23.</sup> great and fundamental a Mercy as Life, after so <sup>Lam. 3.</sup> many Forfeitures thereof, to complain or be dis- <sup>39.</sup> contented for the with-holding or removing some lesser Convenience of it. Considering yet further, that

6. *We profess our selves to be bounden Servants of God's God*, and absolutely subject to his Command and *Servants.* Disposal ; whom therefore it becomes to rest satisfied with our Lord's Appointments and Allowances ; especially we being such as do no way profit our Master, nor do any thing to deserve Wages from him, but *after we have done all things com-* Lu.17.10. *manded us*, must acknowledge that *we are unprofitable Servants.* We, therefore, cannot without extreme Presumption and Arrogance offer to find fault, or to prescribe in what Measure and Manner God should reward and gratifie our Desires. For also,

7. *We are the Children of God* ; either by Nature *Children* and Birth, or by Adoption and Grace. Whence *of God.* it becomes our Duty to submit to his Disposals, to depend on his Care and Provision for us, to confide in his Affection towards us, to resent all kindly from him as good for us, and to be thankful and content therewith, whereby our Condition will be more likely to be amended for us, being obedient Children ; than by always repining and



and craving, being undutiful and rebellious. Nor is it to be forgot, that moreover,

*Christians.* 8. *We are Christians*; Professors of a Religion intended to rescue and exalt Men's Minds and Hearts above sensual Enjoyments; and Followers of a Pattern serene and silent under worse Circumstances, and more painful Sufferings than can befall the most miserable after him; with hopes set before us, able to raise us above the Sense; and Promises assured to us sufficient to supply the Defect of all present Wants, which is therefore a Blessing and Privilege wherewith any thing may well enough content; and an Obligation to repine at nothing. However,

*Fellow-Members of the Publick.*

Lastly, *We are all Members of a Publick Community*; for the Peace and Harmony whereof, it concerns us rather to become the Station we are in, by doing the Duties of it, than to be perpetually uneasy and projecting for a Change, meerly to satisfy our own private Humour. For as 'tis the Publick-Good of Mankind, and not the humouring of any one Person, that the great Governour of the World applies himself to. In all his Disposals; so it is very unreasonable to expect or desire, that the whole Scheme of Providence should be discomposed or altered, for the placing any, only just where they would be. God knows what Station every one is fittest for; and he hath more to please besides our selves; and no doubt but some others may be as weary of their Places as we are, and as much desire to better them. And is it not then great Insolence to expect that God should be more concerned to humour us, than multitudes of others who have the same Desires, and probably more Merits? We, alas! are but an inconsiderable part of the Publick, and ought to

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to remain quiet in any Station for the Good thereof; which is to be regarded before the Satisfaction of any particular Desires, and the likeliest and shortest way to Satisfaction; since agreeable to the Design of Providence, and the Rule of Duty that always *brings Peace at the last*. So Cogent are the Reasons, for quieting impetuous Desires, and restraining *Coveting*, from thus reflecting on *our selves*; who from such a remembrance of what we are, will see all the reason in the World to rest satisfied with what both we our selves and others have.

3. *In regard, further, to the very Enjoyments allotted us*; there are many Considerations affording strong Reasons to recommend to our liking, our present Condition, of whatever sort it is in the World; without desiring any thing beyond it. For it may be considered that,

1. *There is no State so bad, but is, if rightly considered, able to afford Content, and bound reasonable Desires.* For, the Circumstances of any Condition are but just what Opinion makes them; insomuch that we may observe some pleased, with what others are grieved, and the same thing which is ones Affliction, made another's Choice. For, every State hath its advantages as well as evils; there being nothing altogether evil but Sin; and it is only the perverseness or distemper of the Mind that discontents more the Man with the one, than quiets him with the other. Fancy, and not the things themselves give the Wound. For if Misery were an inseparable Companion of what, Opinion terms the evil of a Condition, then would it be impossible for Content ever to sojourn in Cells or Cottages, or to be a Stranger to Wealth and Grandeur; whereas the truth of the quite con-

Psal. 37.  
37.

*In regard to our Condition.*

*Which is able to afford Content.*

contrary is notorious to all. And therefore what ever we have, or have not ; not it, but our own fond Conceit it is which creates the trouble and embitters it to us. Besides,

*Hath  
Mercies  
in it.*

2. *Be it as bad as it can be with us, yet hath even this Condition some Mercies in it :* Every Condition in this World being mixt ; whereas there is none perfectly good, so there is none throughly bad : Eccles. 7. *God having set one over against the other,* as the wise Preacher hath expressed it. And therefore ought the one to compensate and balance the other ; suffering Men no more to be dejected with Adversity, than elevated with Prosperity. Yea,

*More  
Good than  
Evil.*

3. *Every condition at the worst here, hath more of good than evil in it :* Neither are any Man's Sufferings ever comparable to his Enjoyments ; and when most is wanting, still better things are remaining. For usually the thing that discontents, is but the short absence of some one, or very few, less considerable Convenience ; whereas, even at the same time, the things that might, and ought to satisfy, are always very many, and weighty and constant with us. And it is highly reasonable, that the more and better Good remaining, should over-poize the less and lighter Afflictions, by entertaining our selves with the pleasanter, rather than be always poring upon the harsher part of God's Dispensations. For hence,

*Might be  
worse.*

4. *No Condition that discontents, is so bad, but it might confessedly have been much worse.* And even this makes it reasonable ever to be more thankful for what we have, than to be impatient for what we have not. Especially considering also that,

*Best when  
at worst.*

5. *Ones Condition may then be best, when it seems worst to us :* As being the Remedy of the greatest Mischiefs,

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Mischiefs, and the Cause of the greatest Good to us. Wholsome things are not always most toothsome; and when Men are aptest to grieve, then oft have they most reason to be glad; insomuch that had it not been for the badness of their Condition, it could never have been so well with many that are now in the best Conditions. Who can experimentally say with *Psalmist*, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Light affliction which is but for a moment, working for us* (as is observed by the *Apostle*) *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.* And this further suggests 17. to content us, that,

6. *However bad our Condition is, yet it is but the Condition of the present; which for its shortness is scarce worth our Concern.* Neither is there any necessary Connexion between the present and the future; so that as the Present being momentary and transient, can little trouble us; so the Future, being unknown and uncertain, ought not to dismay us. A present Grievance, one would think, might easily be dispenc'd with, and over-look'd and slighted; because it is but *for a moment*; which may end with this, and may never come with the next; all Sublunary Enjoyments being unstable, and frequent Vicissitudes occurring upon them, and all depending on God's arbitrary Disposal; and till we know what the next moment doth bring forth, 'tis unreasonable to disquiet our selves about it; being about that which is not and it may be, never will be. And if it be; it will be time enough to trouble our selves when it comes; and not now and then too. The next moment may Change; and when it is worst, we may hope it will be better; and they that are at best can have no other assurance to depend on.

And

*Psal. 119.*

*71.*

*2 Cor. 4.*

*17.*



And what encourageth them that they shall keep what they have, may support us, that we shall get what we want; so that the hope of future Good may be sufficient to mitigate the present Evil. Which is all we have to conflict with, whereto the *Thoughts* confin'd, could not greatly hurt us, and would easily be vanquished. Yea,

Short at  
the long-  
est.

7. *Should the present Evil continue to the utmost, yet can it not possibly continue long.* It cannot be perpetual because we are Mortal, neither can it be long because Life is so very short. So that what is the usual Debasement of Prosperity, may be the sweetning of Adversity; even the Temporariness of Duration. Nothing that is, short being intolerable, because a little time must alter it. And,

Fore-run-  
ner of  
more  
Good.

8. *The worse our Condition is here, the better we may hope will be our State hereafter.* Hereby being capacitated for more Happiness, and to relish with greater Gust what we shall have. The more Want and Sorrow we have here, the less Punishment shall we have to fear, and the more Comfort to hope for hereafter. For as it is a woful thing to have received *our Portion*, to have enjoyed *our Consolation in this Life*; so 'tis an happy thing to have undergone our Pain here, and to have not only the worst past, but the best hereby made better to us. Our Grievances therefore which discontent us, should hence rather satisfy our Desires, and rejoyce our Hearts; because *they work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.* However,

2 Cor. 4. 17. *Its Evil.* 9, *These Wants complain'd of, are but what are common, and may reasonably be expected and depended on to be met with in this World.* Which is not a place for Ease, nor ever was design'd to be our Heaven;

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Heaven ; but seemeth purposely to be made uneasie and inconvenient, with necessary Cares and Disasters, to exercise our Virtues, to try our Faith, and make us more ready and willing to leave it, whenever God shall call for us hence ; and therefore to find fault with our own, or Envy at anothers Lot here, because every thing is not just to our Mind, is to forget where we are, and to grieve that we are come at all into the World, and vex that we are not already in Heaven, which is the only place exempt from *Tears* and Cause for them ; for *in this World we shall have*, 'tis odds, *Tribulation* ; for which it is the proper Place. And Rev. 21. therefore, further for our Comfort, it may be considered, That

10. *No one Condition is hardly so bad, but that there are many Consorts therein.* That which discontents us is, it may reasonably be supposed, not our Case alone. Many an one before us hath been, or is with us, and will be after us in the like Circumstances. And why should we be uneasie that God dealeth with us, as with many others, as much Men, and possibly less Sinners, than we ? 'Tis reckon'd some Alleviation of Sorrow, not to suffer alone ; the generality of one's Case, and Commonness of the Inconvenience abating of the Nuisance. But then also it may be moreover considered, That

11. *The Condition of many others may probably, of some be much worse, than what discontents.* For, no much Man can, with any Reason, say that his Case is worse. the worst ; and few, upon second thoughts, would be content to stand to an equal Dividend, out of all Men's Conditions in the world, could they be reduced into one Common Bank. So that having more than just an equal share, and than some others

thers have; it is fit that we should be thankful for what we have, and unreasonable to *Corvet* what we have not, and yet are not the most miserable without it. For, even yet again

*What displeaseth as good as what is admired.*

12. *The Circumstances which displease, oft upon inquiry, prove as happy, as those that are most admired and envied.* Superfluity and a Redundance doth but harbour Snares and Cares, which without extreme Assiduity cannot be avoided and seldom are. Whereas the less we have, the less we have to do, and the less we are responsible for; our Burden is smaller, our Account will be more easie, and our Danger less. So that 'tis odds, but in our Circumstances, we are as well and perhaps all things consider'd, much better than even Emperors and Kings; and the Pity due from us to them, ought to reconcile us to our own Condition. For, however

*Born contentedly by our Betters.*

13. *It can hardly be supposed worse to us, than far better Men than we are have contentedly born.* All Ages have noted, that the best Men have sustained most grievous Crosses; whereby especially they were made or remarked such, And scarce is there in Holy Scripture recorded any Person eminent and illustrious for Goodness, who hath not great Afflictions appropriated to him. The best of all Men was *a Man of Sorrow and acquainted with Grief.* And can any pretend; can any hope; can any even wish to be used better! Yea, is it not an Honour; should it not be a Comfort, in Condition, to resemble the very best! So that being compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, the Apostles inference is surely reasonable, *Let us run with Patience the Race which is set before us.* For, indeed

*Ila. 53.3.*

*Heb. 12. 1, 2.*

4. *What*

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Whatever our Condition is, it is not to be mended by our fretting at it. For the Dispensation is God's, and who as he sent the Grievance, so can alone redress it; towards which, our Discontent can effect nothing at all for relief. And therefore till God please to put it into our Power to use means for this End, in this Case, only Patience is to be instead of a Remedy, and what cannot be cured, ought to be endured; it being to no purpose to kick against our Fortune and Necessity, which will but intangle and batter our selves the more: Besides, finally,

Not  
mended  
by Discon-  
tent.

15. The Condition which so disturbs us, 'tis odds, A real is a real sufficiency for us. For a very little will suffice Nature, and less than that, God dispenseth to none. If indeed, Desires are exorbitant, it is not a little that can suffice, but it is not exorbitancy then that is to be provided for, which nothing can satisfy; but pure necessity, which rarely wants, or is soon supplied; especially of all that love and fear God, whom he hath promised never to leave nor forsake, and what is insufficient of its self, his Grace can make sufficient for them. And therefore thus considering the Nature of our Enjoyments, and the Circumstances of our Condition, about which, sinful Covetings are wont to arise, we cannot but apprehend enough to quiet us in any State, and satisfy us with the present Dispensations of his Providence.

Heb. 13.  
5.

4. In regard, Lastly, to that Satisfaction enjoyned, and Discontent forbid us here in this Commandment; it is also, further to be considered, That,

In regard  
to Con-  
tentment.

1. This alone is it, which, Happiness in this World depends on, and by which, it may be kept within a Man's own Power. Hereby every one maketh his own Fortune good or bad; removing the Sting from

On which  
Happiness  
depend.



from the accident, without depending upon Chance, or the uncertain Dispositions of others for his well being, but only on God and his own Spirit. For it may not always be in our Power to change and better our Conditions, but it is our Duty, and therefore always possible, to frame our Minds thereto, and to *possess our Souls in Patience*; which will make happy in spite of all misfortunes. The greatest hurt whereof is commonly the Disturbance thence occasioned to the Mind, and by keeping which quiet, every Man hath Power to make himself as happy as he will.

Which re-  
lisheth En-  
joyments.

*It is only a contented Mind that capacitates us to relish Enjoyments.* Coveting beyond what a Man hath, maketh him to want even what he hath; and rendreth him but worse for having, and makes Possession burthenfome. Whereas Content supplies all Wants, by meeting with Satisfaction in every Condition, which is as much as any Condition can be expected to do for us.

Mitigates  
Adversity.

Hastens  
Deliverance.

3. *This Mitigates Adversity.* Which the more patiently it is born, the less it hurts.

4. *It tends to hasten Deliverance there-from*; by answering the End and Design thereof, and appeasing Divine Wrath, which nothing extinguisheth sooner than Submission, *Who hath hardened him-*

Job. 9. 4. *self against God, and hath prospered?* Saith Job.

1 Pet. 5. 6. *And therefore be humbled, saith St. Peter, under the mighty Hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.*

Reputa-  
ble.

5. *It is much for a Man's Reputation, to be always Content:* Only weak Minds and effeminate Spirits are querulous.

Enrich-  
eth.

6. *It is the most compendious and certain Way to be Rich.* Which, in the Opinion of wise Men, con-

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consisteth not in the Possession of much, but only in the Satisfaction of what one hath ; which freeing from Want, doth as much as the greatest abundance can pretend to do ; and is not only instead thereof, but the very thing it self, only without its Encumbrance. So that Contentment is the best Riches, because wanting the *Vexation* and *Vanity* thereof.

7. *It contributes also, not a little to Health.* The welfare of the Body depending much upon the composed Temper of the Mind. The disturbance whereof, is a ruffle to Nature ; which hindering its regular Operations, contracts Disease. So that a Man may easily fret himself to Death. However,

8. *Contentment is a Grace that hath been highly recommended by the blessed Example of our dear Lord.* *Exemplified by our Lord.* Wherein he eminently excelled, whose straits and misfortunes though more and greater than ours, his Resentments were more calm, and Complaints not so loud, he never *Coveting* any thing, who, though *Lord of all things*, possessed nothing. And,

Lastly, *This, in a Word, is the Will of God concerning us ;* whose Revelation of himself, whether by his Word or Works, hath been only designed to call off Men's minds from the Love and Care of worldly, to that of heavenly things ; this being the end of Religion, and the Condition of Salvation ; and therefore no indifferent thing, left to their own pleasure, no more than to obey God, and keep his Commandments, which is the whole of Man. *Com-manded by God.* *Eccl. 12. 13.*

III. *The method and means of attaining it, in short, are,*

L 2

I. A

Means to  
attain it.  
A good  
Consci-  
ence.

1. *A sedulous Endeavour to live well and keep a good Conscience.* This yielding so ample Satisfaction, as will bear down the Sense of incumbent Wants, and give undisturbed Rest to Desire. He that hath hope in God, and good assurance of his Favour, will *Covet* nothing more; having all he can want herein. And this the *Psalmist* fully expresses, saying, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee.*

Moderati-  
on of De-  
sires.

2. *A striving to suit our Minds to our Conditions, rather than our Conditions to our Minds.* For, the alteration of our Condition is purely the Work of Providence, and belongs not to us; but the Government of our Minds and Desires, God hath made our Duty. And if we take care of this, God will effect the other; *who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.* For, a moderate Appetite is soon satisfied, which being unbound is always Craving.

1 Tim. 6.  
17.

Not Care-  
ing for  
Futurity.

3. *A Confinement of our Contemplation and Passions, as much as may be, wholly to the present.* For which a little will suffice, and any thing may content; and which yet is all we ought to be careful for; and we spoil our Content only by caring for more: By over-valuing what we have in Chase, commonly under-valuing what we have in Possession; and by fearing what may happen, doubling the Load of what is befallen us.

Not look-  
ing above  
our selves.

4. *A comparing our selves, and our Estates rather with those that are below us, than with those that are above.* Whereby the odds we have of advantage being discerned, will silence repining at our own, by Compassion at multitudes of others worse Circumstances. For, why should one or two more prosperous Neighbours be such an Eye-fore to provoke

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provoke Dissatisfaction; rather than ten or twenty poor ones be a Spur to quicken Content and Thankfulness?

5. *A withdrawing Affections from these insufficient Heavenly things here below, to those more satisfactory ones above.* Because there being nothing in the World <sup>Minded-ness.</sup> suitable to the Wants of an immortal Spirit, its Desires are necessarily restless, while in pursuit of any thing thereof; whence *Coveting* is always the effect of earthly Affections; the world never being that in Possession, what it seems to be in Expectation; so that Men will be always desiring, and never satisfied; always uneasy and never at rest, till they have *set their Affections on things above*, which can alone satisfy in Fruition, and in seeking whereof there is no Disappointment.

6. *A due Consideration of our Mortality:* Which <sup>Sense of</sup> representing to us an end to all Grievances, and <sup>Mortality.</sup> the uncertain shortness of all Enjoyments, renders the present State little material to any one. How little is a dying Man concern'd at his outward Circumstances!

7. *A looking even beyond Death;* and contemplating that amazing endless State of Happiness <sup>Thoughts of Eternity.</sup> or Misery, which is the certain Fate of good or bad Men hereafter. The incomparably greater good of the next Life, weighing down all the Evils of this. *For which cause, saith the Apostle, We faint not ---- while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.* <sup>2 Cor. 4. 16.</sup> And the everlasting Agonies of the Damned there, recommending the short Inconveniences of any, or all Misery we are liable to here; *the Sufferings of this present time, being not worthy to be compared, as with the Glory, so with the Torment which shall* <sup>Rom. 8. be 18.</sup>



be revealed. Any Condition short of Hell, may reasonably content Sinners who have deserved nothing short thereof.

Exercise  
of Graces.  
Of Faith.  
Heb. 6.  
19.

Resigna-  
tion.

Repent-  
ance.

Charity.

Thankful-  
ness.

Humility.  
Rom. 12.  
16.

8. *The due Exercise of those particular Graces, tending to procure and maintain a composed Mind, and satisfied Spirit.* Such are *Faith* in God's Promises, which is the *Anchor of the Soul*, whereby it alone can fix its Rest, amidst the Billows of this troubled Sea of the World. *Holy Resignation* to Providence which casteth all anxious Care and Burden from our selves, on him alone who is both mighty and ready to save. *Penitential Sorrow*, which diverts the Discontent and Sadness into the right Channel, and drowns our lesser Grievings by the influx of a greater, nothing more allaying the Sense of Sufferings than to sharpen a Sense of Sin. *Charity*, which obliging to *love our Neighbours as our selves*; will make his Comforts an allay to our Miseries; and by enlarging the heart in Pity for the misfortunes of others, suffers it not to be contracted with Grief for its own; the Sense of publick Calamities drowning that of private, and Complacency in publick Prosperity, allaying all repining at particular misfortunes. *Thanksgiving for Mercies*; which not only multiplies our Comforts, but lessens all occasion for Grief. A kind Receiver hardly ever wanting a bountiful Giver; and an ingrateful Man having no reason ever to complain for want thereof; whom prudence instructeth to re-inforce his Gratitude for what he hath left, as the likeliest means to recover or get what he may have lost or wants. *Humility*, which consisting in lowliness of Mind, teacheth a Man never to *mind high things*; to be neither impatiently bent upon them, nor to become uneasy to himself without them; being content

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tent with any thing, who thinks he hath deserved nothing. *Strict Sobriety*, which teacheth a frugal Use of abundance at all times, and sometimes a voluntary Abstinence. And he who hath once learnt to be without even what he hath, will be much more likely to bear the want of what he hath not. No Man bearing want with less Patience, than he that beareth Plenty with least Moderation. To these and other like means must evermore be added,

Lastly, *Heartly Prayer to God*, whereby not only the querulous Humour will be diverted, but seasonable Relief procured. Therefore is it St. James's Prescription. *Is any Man afflicted? Let him Pray.* And St. Paul exhorts to be careful for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let our Requests be made known unto God; and accordingly in our Church we are provided with this Collect, wherewith we conclude.

O God who declarest thy Almighty Power, most chiefly in shewing Mercy and Pity, mercifully grant unto us such a measure of thy Grace, that we running the way of thy Commandments, may obtain thy gracious Promises, and be made Partakers of thy heavenly Treasure, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collect for  
11th Sunday after  
Trinity.

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# S E R M O N XXXII.

## O N

### Our Duty towards God.

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Matth. xxii. 37, 38.

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind; This is the first and Great Commandment.*

**H**AVING gone through the several Commandments of both the Tables of the Decalogue, our *Catechism* next teacheth us to sum up the Contents thereof by reducing all, after the Example of our Lord, in the Text, to the two principal Laws which comprehend and compleat the whole Duty of Man, of *Loving God with all our Hearts, and loving our Neighbour as our selves; on which two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.* So that sincerely and seriously attending hereto, we can hardly fail of knowing what in any case is our Duty. And therefore the *first* thing we are taught chiefly to learn by these Commandments, is our *Duty towards God*, the which is to love him, as in the Text prescribed, including whatever is commanded

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manded in the four first of these Ten Commandments which are the first Table-Duties, and the one *First and Great Commandment* equalling all the rest.

These words, by a Review on the Context, appear to be part of our Saviour's Answer to an ensnaring Question put to him by a Jewish Lawyer. Wherein, waving the more nice Inquiries arising from the Context, three Particulars are plainly distinguishable; viz.

I. A Precept; and that is to *love the Lord our God.*

II. The Degree, Extent or Measure hereof; which must be *with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Mind.* And,

III. *The Argument to enforce it; This is the first and great Commandment.*

I. *The Precept is to love the Lord our God.* Which *What it is* though reckon'd in our *Catechism*, but as one single Duty towards God, and a Branch only of the first Table-Laws; yet is it here by our Lord expressly enjoyn'd as our whole Duty, including and fulfilling all the rest required from us to him. And therefore what there is considered only in *Affection*, is here intended also in reference to *Action*, whereof *Love* is the necessary Principle; so that as there is *Love to God* in every Duty performed to him, so is every such Duty but a various Expression thereof. All Piety being the Effect of Divine Love, streaming from this one and the same Fountain, and running in different Channells towards the same Center. So that he who *lovethe God truly*, cannot but *believe in him, fear him, earnestly desire him, worship him, give him thanks,*  
put



put his whole trust in him, call upon him, honour his holy Name and his Word, and serve him truly all the Days of his Life. And he who doth these things may truly be said to love God, whereof these are the proper Effects. For,

*To believe in him.* Love is the most credulous thing in the World, Faith being led oft by Affection, contrary to even the apprehension of Reason. How easily is a Lover perswaded by his Beloved! And therefore the Perswasions of Reason can be frustrated only by Prejudice; and 'tis Hatred makes the Infidel.

*To fear him.* Whom also when Men love, they are fearful to offend him, in whose favour only there is Life, and in Disunion from whom is nothing but Desolation and Sorrow. Nothing is more awfully obsequious than a Lover; Caution ever following Affection; and the only reason why God looketh, with a singular Favour, towards the Man that trembleth at his word, is because such are the most passionate Lovers of him.

*To love him with all my mind, &c.* Earnestness of Desire is also Love with all the Heart, and Mind, and Soul, and Strength; being a Passion whereby the Soul is disposed to unite to what it loves; so that there is no one thing that is more impatient at the Absence, or more passionately desirous of its proper Object's Presence; always thirsting after Enjoyment, and restless till obtained by it. As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul, (saith the Psalmist in Love with God) after thee, O God! My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?

*To worship him.* So also Adoration and Worship is the Effect of Affection, magnifying the real or supposed Worth of its Object; which, being God, is infinitely transcending

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scending, and naturally producing a succumbency of Soul, and working it into a Religious Prostration. Fear may force an outward Homage, but only Love can create an inward Veneration.

In like manner *Love*, that is apt to take all in good part, is ever the most forward to *give thanks* To give him thanks. for Kindnesses; being quick to apprehend, tenacious to remember, and ready to acknowledge every the least Favour of its Beloved. Nothing but Enmity and Ill-will producing Ingratitude.

Thus farther *Love* inclines to *Confidence* in its Beloved, as it begets esteem, and casts out all fear and suspicion, by reconciling, conforming and uniting Inclinations; so that to Will and Nill the same thing, is a certain Effect, if not the formal Reason thereof. Mistrust is the Creature of Jealousie or Prejudice; None can *wholly trust* To put my whole trust in him. Eadem velle & eadem nolle. those whom they do not intirely Love. Where the Wills lie cross, Affections are disunited.

Nothing moreover, is more importunate than *Love*, to *call upon*, and converse with, and sue To call upon him. to the Beloved; courting Favour, and venting Affection in unwearied Addresses upon every Opportunity. An Heart inflamed with Love, inspires Eloquence into the Tongue, which cannot then be long mute. *I was dumb with silence* (saith the Psalmist again) *I held my Peace even from good, and my Sorrow was stirred.* Love unvented is very uneasie, and opprest'd with the gloomy Vapours of *Musing*; but when the Fire burned, then the *Tongue spake.* Pl. 39. 2.

No less does *Honour* and Esteem flow from *Love*. Such being the frame of a Human Soul, To honour his holy Name and his Word. that the Perceptive part doth always go before the Appetitive, and Affection follows Opinion: So that

that we love just as we apprehend ; the better we think of any thing, the more we love it ; and till we think well of it, we cannot possibly love it ; no Object being beloved till represented by Reason or by Fancy worthy and good. And therefore are they Lovers of God who *Honour his holy Name and his Word* ; respecting every thing belonging to, or flowing from him ; admiring his Perfections, and owning his Authority ; the Performance of which Duties depends intirely upon our Affection towards him.

*And to  
serve him  
truly all  
the days of  
my Life.*

Finally, It is also the Property of Love cheerfully and perseveringly to do and suffer whatever its Beloved doth desire or command ; *serving truly all the dayes of ones Life.* No Slave being more obsequious than a Lover ; and no Service more readily undergone, nor more expeditely discharged, nor less repined at, than wherein such are concern'd. Affection is the Wing of the Soul that carries it over all Difficulties and Dangers ; without which, as it is slow and unactive, so with it is all Vigour, Strength, Skill, and Performance. What is it Men cannot do and suffer for Love!

Jc. 14. 15. Therefore saith our Lord, *if ye love me, keep my Commandments* ; knowing that all such will be sure to do so. And therefore also he adds, *he that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ;* ----- And again, *if any love me, he will keep my Words.* And therefore, saith he also, *he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings* : And saith his beloved Disciple accordingly, *He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him.* But *whofo keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected.* So that the Sum of all Obedience is Love, and the only Evidence of Love is Obe-

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Obedience. Such is the comprehensive *Nature of Divine Love*, which includes or infers every particular Instance of our *Duty towards God*, commanded in the first Table of the Ten Commandments; hereby appearing no less difficult than great and generous. Yet such it is, and by such Effects to be examin'd in our selves. No Tree more naturally being known by its Fruit, than this Grace by these Indications. And so much only as we perceive of these Performances, so much Love may be concluded towards God. And what Degrees hereof will suffice, or come up to that Measure which will be accepted of as sincere, that we may not fatally mistake, the next Particular will direct. Which is,

II. *The Degree, Extent or Measure of loving God*, *What is enjoined to be with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Mind*: The explanation whereof will be a satisfactory Resolution of this Inquiry. And to this end, it must be granted, that by this Phrase, frequent in Scripture, cannot be meant,

I. *Such love to God as excludes our loving of any thing else besides him*: As if our Heart and Soul and Mind ought in no Degree or Manner to regard any other Object; because such a Sense is both absurd and impossible. For, we are also commanded to *love our Neighbour as our selves*; and consequently *our selves* also, as necessary to Self-preservation, and Enjoyment of the Comforts of the present State; allowed us by God, conducing to his Praise, and freely pursued and reaped with his Approbation, even by the best of Men; to some of whom the Character hath been given of being *after God's own Heart*. However, less cannot be supposed to be meant hereby than

2. *Such*



*Love of  
God must  
be sincere.*

2. *Such a Love to God as is undissembled and sincere*; wherein the whole Affection, without reserve or division, is engaged; and wherein all the Faculties of the Soul are one, and go together; so as both what is outwardly profess'd and inwardly intended is the same thing. That being said to be done *with all the Heart, and with all the Soul* (according to common Usage of the Phrase) that is honestly intended and sincerely endeavoured. Whence the *Double-Heart* is joyned to *flattering Lips* by the *Psalmist*; and those Men of War, that were noted for their faithfulness to him, are said *not to have been of a double heart*. This also may import,

*Fervent.*

3. *Fervency of Affection*, being wholly bent hereupon, and engaged herein, with the utmost of our Power, to the most intense Degree of Love, which, having God for its Object, admits of no limitation; because no Degree of Love can possibly equal the Merit of God. And he that thinks he can love God enough, to be sure loveth him not so much as he ought; Moderation, which in other Passions is an Excellency, in this, being an Imperfection. Consequently this implies,

*Peculiar.*

4. *Principality in Affection obliging to love God*, with a Degree of Affection peculiar to himself, and in a manner wherein we must love nothing besides him, whose share in our *Heart and Soul* is to be so large, in respect to what may be reserved for other things, that even the *whole* is attributed to him. Other things may be loved, but nothing above God; nothing equally with God; much less contrary to, or against him; nothing must have the Heart so intirely as he; and nothing that opposes him must have it at all. God being to be loved principally and for himself, other

ther things only secondarily, in subordination to God, and for his Sake. This Phrase again may denote

5. *Universality of Affection*; being wholly devoted to God, so as never to be alienated from him, obliging to a constant and uniform Love, that is not fickle and various, being sometimes for, and sometimes against God, but at all times and in every thing cleaving to him, undivided neither in *Time* nor *Matter*; the Heart standing wholly for God, and for every thing of him. It being a constant Passion, not to be extinguish'd, however interrupted, that is God's due. Not every flash of Zeal, or violent Transport, or amorous Extravagancy, which come and return like the Tide, but it is a calm and lasting Flame that abates not either of its Heat or Light; descending like a Never-failing River, ever running into the Ocean of Divine Excellency, passing on in the Channels of Duty, and persevering Obedience, not ceasing to be what it is, till it attain to be what it desires, still being a River, till it be turned into a Sea and Vastness, even the Immensity of a blessed Eternity. Such was the steady Passion of Job; when he said, *though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.* An Affection that stood trial; a Love approved; which nothing can be divide or separate from God. Hereto may not impertinently be added, that this Phrase may finally imply

6. *A prudential Considerativeness governing this Passion*; which is not to be suffered to out-run our Intellectuals, in a blind ungoverned Zeal; but to take along with it the whole Heart and Mind, and Soul, pondering and weighing the Greatness and Distance that is between God and our selves, in order

order so to temper the Freedom of Love, as to forget neither our Distance nor Interest in respect to God; who though allowed to be *Confidents*, yet ought to behave our selves ever as *Servants* of the Almighty infinitely our Superiour; to whom Reverence as well as Love is due, and ought to be expressive the one of the other. Which unwary Men not regarding, have taken Liberty to treat their Creator with most indecent Familiarity, and the heedless Expressions of Love among Equals; where the sincerity of Affection is wont to excuse the rudeness of Address, and to dispense with the Formality of Manners, and will own no Distance.

In this Manner and to such Degree is our Love to God, in every Instance of Duty to be expressed.

To love  
God is a  
Com-  
mand-  
ment.

III. The Argument to enforce it is, This is the first and great Commandment.

1. It is a Commandment. Not one only of the four belonging to the first Table of the Decalogue, but the whole thereof; enjoined in every one of them; which can be kept only hereby; without which, even Performance can be no discharge of any thereof.

The first  
Com-  
mand-  
ment.

2. It is the first Commandment. Even  
1. That to which we have the first and earliest Obligation: Which is the receiving our very Being; it self being a good, and the Foundation and Possibility of all the good which we do or shall ever enjoy: And which therefore is no sooner received than we obliged thereby to love the Donor, and our Creator, whose we are, with all the Powers he hath given us therewith. And also

2. This

2. *This is what ought to be first practised by us.* Because what otherwise will be first transgressed; the irregular Love of other things being superseded only by the Prepossession of the Love of God. For, Love is the first Motion of the Soul; a desire of Good, immediately succeeding the Capacity of it; which if not placed on God, who is our only true Good, will wander after the Creature in Vanity and Vexation. And,

3. *This is the Foundation on which future Obedience depends:* The first Stone to be laid in the spiritual Building; whereon all the Duties of Religion stand; which being wanting, they tumble into Ruin and Confusion. All Obedience begins and endeth in Love to God, which is therefore deservedly said to be the *First Commandment*, requiring our chief and utmost regard, to which we are obliged from the first Moment of our Existence, and is the first Duty we owe to God.

3. *It is also the great Commandment.* It appears to be so whether as to its Dimensions, its Matter, its Obligation, its Power and Vertue, or its Pleasure and Duration. *The great Commandment.*

1. *To love God is a great Commandment in its Dimensions:* Comprehending all Duty; mixing its self with all Religion; extending to every Faculty; spreading it self through the whole Soul; reaching beyond all sublunary Enjoyments, into the very utmost recesses of Heaven; having Immensity for its Object; exceeding all Knowledge, and indeed every thing but Sense and Experience. *Being rooted and grounded in Love, we alone may be able, the Apostle tells us, to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height:* *As to its Dimensions.*  
*And to know the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge.* *Eph. 3. 17. &c.*



Matter.

2. *To Love God is the great Commandment, as to its Matter*; being the Advancement of human Nature to its Perfection here, and Capacitating it for Glory hereafter; which therefore is of the most weighty and concerning Importance to the final Happiness of Man. It renders him, in a Manner and Degree, already Divine, both by Resemblance and Approximation. For, *God being Love*, the Man who loves God as he ought, being wrapt up into one Desire, and having all the Powers, Vigour and Faculties of the Soul abridg'd into this one Inclination, becomes hereby something more than Human; being irradiated with a Ray of Divinity; and thereby united to the Divine Nature, by the closest Union Mortality is capable of. And therefore, he that observeth this *Commandment*, doth a *Great Work*; even all required from him, all needed by him, and as much as can be done to make him both *Like* and *Near* to God. Great and Happy both in this World and the other.

Obligati-  
on.

3. *To love God is further, the great Commandment, as to its Obligation*; being absolutely Indispensible, and highly Reasonable, since no Man can be without Obligation; wherewith he is created, and from which he can never be discharged; and since God is infinitely amiable, and so altogether kind and engaging. So that whether God be considered *Absolutely*, and only as he is in himself, or *Relatively* as he shews himself to us; being both lovely and loving, he may justly Challenge the highest degree of our Affection from every thing else, wholly to himself. For,

God abso-  
lutely.  
considered  
being.

1. *Absolutely*, and in himself, God is proposed to us as possessed of all Excellencies attractive of Love; who is the Center from which all are derived

derived, where-ever found imperfectly out of himself.

*Wisdom*, that is both the Ornament and Perfection of a Creature, is but a spark of Light, fallen from the *Father of Lights*, which is infinitely more dazzling in the Creator. Whom therefore the Apostle calleth *the only wise God*, being Wise beyond comparison, Wise, so as none besides him is; even Necessarily, Originally, Perfectly, Universally, Perpetually, Incomprehensibly and Infallibly so. Wise. Jam. 1. 17. Tim. 1. 17.

*Power*, To which Self-interest commands the Affection, and is therefore so universally Courted among Men, is only in its *Almightiness* with God: And whom therefore it is most reasonable to fear making our Enemy, and to covet Protection under his Friendship. Powerful.

*Justice*, Which renders the *righteous Man* to be more excellent than his Neighbours, who generally hate and are jealous of nothing more than Fraud and Treachery; is another Perfection of God, that cannot but represent him amiable; as one from whom we can fear no Wrong, who is faithful in all his Dealings, and in whom one may safely confide and trust, and upon whom we may cast all our Burden and Cares from off our selves, he caring for us: And therefore, Just. Prov. 12. 26. 1 Pet. 3. 7.

*Benignity or Kindness*, Which no Man ever hated; which wins upon all; and which is fundamentally Essential to the very Notion of God, who is the Fountain of all Good and Goodness it self, still increases his Merit of our most ardent Love; and the only proper return of Love, being Love, it adds to our Obligation to love God most, because his Love to us hath been the greatest. As to *Extensiveness* being infinitely vast, like

*Kind.*

- the boundless Ocean whereof no side or end can be seen, it running through all time, in every Place, to every Person, and in every Respect in numberless Instances: As to its *Freeness*, being intirely its own Motive and Design, without any Merit on our side, or Sinister end on God's. As to its *Constancy*, being immutable as his Essence; who *having loved his own, he loveth them unto the end*; and *his Mercy endureth for ever*, without interruption, even when it may seem most otherwise to us. And as to its *Advantage*, being the Original of all our Blessings; there being a certain *Richness in Divine Mercy*, insomuch that the want of any the least share thereof, presently makes Men sensible of its value.
- Glorious.* *Beauty*, indeed, which dazles the Eye, and enflames a Passion; though we are not to imagine it such in God as what is admired in Creatures, made up of Proportion and Colour; yet being his work doth argue him to be more Excellent and Lovely himself; as being himself possessed in infinite Perfection, of whatever he imparts to others. For, *he that planted the Ear* (as the Holy Scripture argues) *shall he not hear? He that formed the Eye shall he not see?* And tho' we cannot, in this State of Distance and Mortality *see God and live*; yet those glorious Creatures that do *behold his Face*, are represented to live in the greatest admiration of his Beauty, and to be dazled with the Glory of it; for which Reason the *Seraphims*, in the Vision of *Isaiah*, appeared *covering their Faces* in the Presence of God, either as blushing at their own comparative Deformity, or as unable to sustain the so hear and unqualified Splendour of the Divine Perfections: And the Joys of Heaven are express'd by our *seeing the Lord*; our
- Jo. 13. 1. *having loved his own, he loveth them unto the end*; and *his Mercy endureth for ever*, without interruption, even when it may seem most otherwise to us. And as to its *Advantage*, being the Original of all our Blessings; there being a certain *Richness in Divine Mercy*, insomuch that the want of any the least share thereof, presently makes Men sensible of its value.
- Eph. 2. 4. certain *Richness in Divine Mercy*, insomuch that the want of any the least share thereof, presently makes Men sensible of its value.
- Pl. 24. c. *Scripture argues) shall he not hear? He that formed the Eye shall he not see?* And tho' we cannot, in this State of Distance and Mortality *see God and live*; yet those glorious Creatures that do *behold his Face*, are represented to live in the greatest admiration of his Beauty, and to be dazled with the Glory of it; for which Reason the *Seraphims*, in the Vision of *Isaiah*, appeared *covering their Faces* in the Presence of God, either as blushing at their own comparative Deformity, or as unable to sustain the so hear and unqualified Splendour of the Divine Perfections: And the Joys of Heaven are express'd by our *seeing the Lord*; our
- Exod. 33. 20. *live*; yet those glorious Creatures that do *behold his Face*, are represented to live in the greatest admiration of his Beauty, and to be dazled with the Glory of it; for which Reason the *Seraphims*, in the Vision of *Isaiah*, appeared *covering their Faces* in the Presence of God, either as blushing at their own comparative Deformity, or as unable to sustain the so hear and unqualified Splendour of the Divine Perfections: And the Joys of Heaven are express'd by our *seeing the Lord*; our
- Mat. 18. 10. *live*; yet those glorious Creatures that do *behold his Face*, are represented to live in the greatest admiration of his Beauty, and to be dazled with the Glory of it; for which Reason the *Seraphims*, in the Vision of *Isaiah*, appeared *covering their Faces* in the Presence of God, either as blushing at their own comparative Deformity, or as unable to sustain the so hear and unqualified Splendour of the Divine Perfections: And the Joys of Heaven are express'd by our *seeing the Lord*; our
- Isa. 6. 2. *live*; yet those glorious Creatures that do *behold his Face*, are represented to live in the greatest admiration of his Beauty, and to be dazled with the Glory of it; for which Reason the *Seraphims*, in the Vision of *Isaiah*, appeared *covering their Faces* in the Presence of God, either as blushing at their own comparative Deformity, or as unable to sustain the so hear and unqualified Splendour of the Divine Perfections: And the Joys of Heaven are express'd by our *seeing the Lord*; our
- Heb. 12. 14. *live*; yet those glorious Creatures that do *behold his Face*, are represented to live in the greatest admiration of his Beauty, and to be dazled with the Glory of it; for which Reason the *Seraphims*, in the Vision of *Isaiah*, appeared *covering their Faces* in the Presence of God, either as blushing at their own comparative Deformity, or as unable to sustain the so hear and unqualified Splendour of the Divine Perfections: And the Joys of Heaven are express'd by our *seeing the Lord*; our

admiration of whose Beauty will make up a great part of our everlasting Happiness.

*Constancy and Immutability* also, which is none *Immuta-ble.* of the least Encouragements of Love, rendring it safe, and easie and lasting, is so peculiarly an ingredient of the Divine Amiability, that our loving any other Object is but hence the Enlargement of our heart for Misfortune. So that were it not for the Exercise of Vertues more than for the Partnership of Fortunes, all other Loves would be declined as injurious. For only *with God, is Jam. i. 17. no variableness, neither shadow of turning*; on whom the height of Passion may exert it self, whose Constancy can never disappoint Expectation, nor Infelicity disturb Affection.

So amiable is God by all the Excellencies that are attractive of our Love: And therefore whatever reason we have to love any thing for what it is in it self, we have much more so to love God, who is that, and much more, and only merits the height of human Affection, thus considered absolutely and in himself.

2. *Relatively* considered, as he is to us; being *Relatively* possess'd of all those endearing Relations, together and in the nearest Union, whereby *considered God is* Affections are wont to be engaged among our selves; God also appears as necessarily meriting and commanding our heartiest Love.

As our *Creator*, he hath evidently such an absolute Interest in us, as nothing besides him can *Our Creator* pretend to rival him in; whose we are, and to whom we owe all we have or are.

As our most *Loving Father*, that sustains and *Father* provides for and beareth with us, with the most tender Care and constant Assiduity; we cannot think our selves bound to return him less than a



filial Affection, which is or ought to be the most submissive and unlimited.

*Saviour.*

As our *Saviour and Redeemer* from Misery and Destruction, to whom we owe not only our Life but our Happiness, his Title to our Love is yet further strengthened by Gratitude and Justice. From the Sense whereof the *Apostle* could not forbear to pronounce, *If any Man love not the Lord Jesus Christ*; [even God our Saviour] *let him be, Anathema Maranatha.*

1 Cor. 16.  
22.

*Judge.*

But if the Sense of even such Relations of kindness cannot work upon Ingenuity, God may yet be consider'd under another of Terror, that may compel those who will not be allured to value his Favour. And that is as our *Judge*, in whose hand is our eternal Fate of Woe or Happiness, at whose Will we all lie for Mercy; and therefore without an interest in his Favour we are irrecoverably lost and undone. So that in Love to our selves, our Obligation to love God upon this account, is indispensable. And to perswade Men to love God, is but to perswade them to love themselves; beyond which there is nothing to be said or fancied by way of Motive.

So great is the Obligation of this *Commandment*, in respect to what God is in himself, and the Relation he stands in to us, whereby it self appears to be *Great*; greatly requiring a due Observation from us.

This Com-  
mand-  
ment  
great in  
its Virtue.

4. *To love God is yet moreover the great Commandment in the Power and Vertue of it*; as being the most fruitful and prolifick Principle, the Root and Seed of all Excellency and Perfection, such as gives Being and Ease, and Worth and Dispatch, and Reward to the Observation of all the *Commandments*.

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1. *It draws on with it the Practice of all other Duties.* It comprehendeth all within it self; it being the sum and perfection of Obedience. It disposeth and inclineth to all; being the Principle of Action, and Commander of the Will and Resolution to stick at nothing. And where this is, God will not deny any of his Graces, who *with-holdeth no good thing from them that walk up-rightly.* And therefore to love God is the certain way to keep his Commandments. Yea, *Psal. 84. 1 Jo. 5. 3. Easie.*

2. *This facilitates, and is the only thing that can make the keeping of God's Commandments easie to us;* reconciling to us the Severities of Religion, and making us chearfully to submit thereto: There being nothing difficult to Love, which is as Oyl to the Wheels that makes them move without toyl or let; and whereto there is no other Principle in force and activity comparable. Fear may drive to a compliance with some, and Hope may draw to an Observance with others; but it is Love that with a willing constraint, and kindly Violence carries on chearfully, and whets Resolution by Difficulty, delighting to conquer hardly, and by great Atchievements. Yea,

3. *It self is the only thing that gives Worth and Value to all other Acts of Duty:* It being the Soul of Obedience, without which all Religion is but a dead Performance. For whatever we do or suffer, if it be not out of Love to God, it loseth both its Nature and Reward; whereas the most indifferent and common Performance flowing from this Principle, becomes Religion and is acceptable to God: *Even a cup of cold water given to any in the name of a Disciple, will not be unrewarded.* Every thing is taken in Good-part, that is done out of Good-will. The meanest Action is en-

Matt. 10. 42.

nobled hereby ; for want whereof the most Heroick degenerates. It converts whatever is done therewith into Religion and Devotion ; and nothing done without it can be other than indifferent or impious. Therefore,

*Compendious.*

4. *This is the most compendious Dispatch of Obedience*, the shortest way to God, and the Enjoyment of him ; contracting the whole Law and the Prophets into Epitome, to be run over in one Act. Wherefore our Saviour, in the Parallel place to our Text, having recited this Duty, adds, *Do this, and thou shalt live.* 'Tis but loving God as we ought, which the most Ignorant may be capable to learn, the most Indigent to obtain, the most Forgetful to remember, the most Busie to attend on, and the most Feeble to do it ; and we shall have pass'd through all the tedious Course, have overcome all the severe Tryals of Religion, have become full of all Grace, rich in all good Works, and have done all required for the Attainment of *Life eternal.* For,

*Profitable.*

5. *Even to this one Vertue is due the Reward of keeping all God's Commandments.* Wherein the whole Condition of everlasting Salvation is imply'd, both by way of Procurement and Enjoyment. So that as none can possibly hope ever to dwell with God in Heaven, whose Affection is not first wholly inflamed with his Love here on Earth ; so will none other ever desire it. For, as God will not suffer such as Love him not to dwell in his Presence, so would not such be able to endure it ; because the Felicity of one not loved, is a Rack to the mind of him that must be constrained always to behold it. And therefore 'tis only our love to God, that can make us Happy for ever with him : This imparting to us a share

in

in his Felicity, proportionable to the degree of our Love for him. So that the more we love God, the Happier we shall be with him; and as we grow up towards the Perfection of the heavenly State, our Joy will be encreasing, till it become all Heaven; an eternal *Paradise* of Delights within us; a living Spring, whence *Rivers of Pleasures* will issue for evermore. And this helps us to a further Notion of the greatness of this Commandment. Since also,

6. *To love God is so in the Pleasure of it.* For as Love is the most pleasant Passion, so the Love of God is the most pleasing Love. Love naturally soothes and ravishes the Heart, puts the Spirits into a brisk and generous Motion, warms the Soul all o'er with Joy, and fills every corner with Delight, disperses Melancholy, Darkness and turbulent Motions, that would create Trouble and Discontent, being placed on a good Object, and acting rationally. And therefore resting upon God, where 'tis so much to advantage, where Enjoyment is certain, without Disappointment, without Loss, without being cloyed; how ravishing is the Delight, how solid the Peace, how full the Joys, how bright the Region, how intire the Enjoyment, how settled the Calm of that Soul which is on Fire with Divine Love, and reposes her full weight upon God! For as is the Object or main end on which our Soul fixes as its Happiness, such is the Man's Condition, quiet or restless, constant or wavering, discontented or satisfied. He that pursues Earthly things as his chief End, becomes vain, unstable, unsatisfied and perplexed; led up and down by the foolish Fire of Sense or Phancy; changing as they and the World change; disquieted with that *Vexation*  
and



and Vanity which he finds abroad, and that Sedition bred at home between Reason and unreasonable Lusts, Affection and Passions. Whereas he only who rests and centers himself in God, that one End, and Sovereign Good, is reconciled and united, not only to himself; but to all the various Occurrences in the World: Nothing ever coming amiss to him, who desires nothing but the Enjoyment of God, which nothing but himself can give him disturbance in. So that herein alone consists the greatest, only real Pleasure of a Man's Life. To Love the Creature cannot answer the end of Love. To Love God is the best way to enjoy the Creature. And 'tis below the Soul, and unsuitable to its Capacities, to Love any thing as its chief Good but God. And therefore our Obligation hereto is a Command greatly for the Comfort and Pleasure of human Life. Yea, and which Crowns all, to compleat its Importance;

Great for its Duration.  
6. This, finally, is the great Commandment for its Duration. Which will never be outdated, or disannull'd, but be not only our Obligation while we live, but our Happiness after we are dead; but living all the other Duties of Religion; which will be all swallowed up in this. And when we shall be no longer necessitated or capacitated for Faith, or Hope, or Fear, our Love towards God will then become perfect and endure to make us happy to all Eternity.

Such is the Greatness of this Commandment, and such our Obligation to observe it, in all the Instances of this first Table. To effect which, by way of Direction, it may be requisite. 1. That we suppress, and as much as in us lies, free our Hearts from all base and lower Affections, particular-  
ly

ly from all *Love to Sin*, which is *Enmity towards God*; from all inordinate *Love of the World*, which if any Man so love, the *Love of the Father*, we are told, *is not in him*; and from all immoderate *Love of our selves*; which ever fills a Man so full, as to leave no room to think well of any other. 2. *That we endeavour, by serious and frequent Consideration, to attain to a right and clear Apprehension of the Divine Perfections*: It being only our Ignorance, or Disregard of God, that makes us cold and indifferent towards him. *He that loveth not, saith St. John, knoweth not God*, And, 3. *That we inure our selves to assiduous earnest Addresses to God by Prayer*. Which not only by way of Impetration are the most likely means of obtaining this or any other Grace, as God's Gift, who giveth his Spirit, from which it floweth, only to them who ask it; but also by way of Energy, and its own immediate Virtue, as an Instrument of God's Grace, it is the most probable means of working it in us; as Converse begets Familiarity, and such near and often Intercourse will dispose for Love and Acquaintance. Therefore conclude we, praying with our Church,

Rom. 8.7

1 Jo. 2.15.

1 Jo. 4.8

*Lord of all Power and Might, who art the Author and Giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the Love of thy Name; increase in us true Religion; nourish us with all Goodness, and of thy great Mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Collett for the 7th. Sund. after Trin.

SER.

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# S E R M O N XXXIII.

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## O N

### Our Duty towards our Neighbour.

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Matth. xxii. 39.

*And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt Love thy Neighbour as thy self.*

**T**O the Love of God, whereof we last discours'd, is joyned, as Inseparable, the Love of our Neighbour; both equally going to make up the Decalogue, and to fulfil the Law of the Prophets.

These words, also, consist of three Particulars, viz.

I. A Precept, or Duty enjoyned; which is to Love our Neighbour.

II. The Degree, Extent or Measure thereof; which must be even as our selves. And,

III. The Argument to enforce it. This, though the Second, is like in Equality of Concern and Authority, unto the First great Commandment of loving God.

I. The Precept, then, or Duty here enjoyned, is, to Love our Neighbour. For the understanding whereof;

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of; we must know *who is our Neighbour*; and *what that Love* is we are to yield him.

1. *Our Neighbour is now, Any and Every Man: Who is*  
The whole World being made one Neighbour-  
hood, by the very same Reason that the *Jews* *our Neigh-*  
esteemed only Men of their own Religion their *bour.*  
Neighbours; being all but one People; not on- *Lev. 19.*  
ly by Nature, as derived from the same Stock, *18.*  
but by Grace, as Partakers of the common Re-  
demption; whereby the Partition-wall is broken  
down, which before had separated the *Jews*, as  
a peculiar People from all the world besides; the  
whole Race of Mankind being cemented by the  
Blood of Christ, and made again one People,  
Fellow-Subjects, Brethren and Neighbours unto  
one another; and God's Favour embracing all,  
obligeth Men's Affection to exclude none. And  
this our Saviour hath determin'd once for all, in  
that his Answer to the Lawyer's Question, *And*  
*who is my Neighbour?* propounding a Case; where-  
by he extorted a Concession, that even a *Samari-* *Luk. 10.*  
*tan*, one that stood at the farthest distance from *29.*  
a *Jew*, might become a *Neighbour* to him; and  
that therefore it can be neither distance of Place,  
nor contrariety of Interest, no nor Diversity of  
Opinion in matters of Religion, that may dissolve  
the Obligation of mutual Love. But every Man,  
be he what he will, of whatever Country, or  
Calling, or Sect, or Interest, yet to a *Christian* he  
is *Neighbour*, to whom such kindness is due, as  
the *Jews* thought themselves bound only to pay  
to the Children of their own People. And what  
that is, will now be considered, by instancing  
in those prime and most immediate Effects of  
Love among men, And therefore,



What it is  
to love our  
Neigh-  
bour.

2. To Love our Neighbour, implies these two things. 1. To do no Evil, and, 2. To do good to him; on the first being founded all the Laws of Justice, and on the latter those of Charity; in which two are comprehended all the several Duties of the second Table, enjoined by God towards Man.

To whom  
we must  
do no  
wrong.  
Rom. 13.  
10.

1. The Negative part thereof is to do no Wrong to any other. Which is indeed the lowest Expression of kindness; yet it is a kindness, not to hate or injure another, whereby the *Apostle* describeth Love, and whereupon he says it is the fulfilling of the Law, even of strict Justice, as it worketh no ill to his Neighbour. Whether in his Life, by maiming or taking it away, either, under pretence of Justice, by a false Charge of capital Crimes, which is false Witness: Or by private Force or open Violence, which is Murder: Or in his Reputation, by falsely imputing, or maliciously displaying Faults, which is Slander and Calumny: Or in his Belief and Expectation, by abusing him by Lying or Persidy: Or in his Bed, by invading the inviolable Contract of Marriage; which is Adultery: Or finally, in his Goods and Estate, through an unsatisfiedness with our own Condition, and greedy longing for what is another's, which is Covetousness; depriving him, either directly, by secret or open force, and without his Knowledge and Consent, which is Stealing; or Indirectly, extorting or necessitating his Consent, either through his Impotency to resist, which is Oppression; or his Necessity, forcing him to comply against his Inclination, which is Exhortation; or his Ignorance to understand his own Interest, and our evil Intent against him, which is Fraud and Cozenage. And therefore our Duty towards our Neigh-

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*Neighbour* that obliges us to *Love him as our selves*, we are taught that it also enjoyns us to *hurt no Church body by Word or Deed.* To be true and Just in all our Dealings. To bear no Malice nor Hatred in our Hearts.

To keep our Hands from Picking and Stealing, and our Tongue from Evil-speaking, Lying and Slandering.---Not to covet, nor desire other Men's Good's.---

All which are the lowest Instances of *Love*, any Man can expresse towards his *Neighbour*, and only the Negative Part of the Duty he owes him. For, *Love* is not only innocent, and harmless, and careful to create no trouble, nor occasion any Prejudice; but also good Natur'd, and full of Kindness and Benevolence, and Diligent to cause all the Pleasure and Profit it can to it's Beloved? Therefore,

2. The Affirmative, and Positive part hereof is to do all Manner of Good to any other; whereon, as was said, are grounded all the particular Laws of *Charity*; which are variously expresse'd according to the different Circumstances our *Neighbour* may be in. So that, though all Men are our *Neighbours*, and consequently have a Right to our *Love*; yet all not being in the like Circumstances of Condition, nor in the same Degree of Relation to us; our *Love* to one must necessarily expresse it self otherwise, than to another; and imply in it self Duties towards some, to which there may be no obligation in respect to others. And therefore, that we may know what *Love* to expresse, we must consider our *Neighbour* who wants or requires it: Whether he be *Good* or *Bad*, or *Weak*, or *Prosperous*, or *Afflicted*, or *Below* us, or our *Equal*, or a *Stranger*; or our *Friend*, or Finally, our *Enemy*.

*Love*

*Whether good Men.* Love towards *vertuous and good Men*, must be most affectionate and ardent, burning brighter and warming more strongly such, who are next to God, (as being most like God) the very chief Objects of our Love. We who are commanded to *do good to all*, being obliged *especially* to do Good to *them who are of the Household of Faith*. And therefore what may serve as a very good Expression of *Charity* towards another, may fall short of that Duty towards a good Man, and be interpreted a slighting him, to whom a Preference belongs:

*Bad Men.* Love towards *Bad and wicked Men*; (whose even *Unworthiness* cannot more exclude them from our Affection, than their real *Necessity* doth recommend them to it,) as towards the most wretched and miserable Objects, must be express'd in hearty *Compassion and Pity*, for their sad Circumstances which are the sadder for their own *Insensibility* thereof; Men's *not keeping God's Laws*, being a just occasion for *Rivers of Tears*. In assiduous *En- deavours* for their *Reformation*, by seasonable *Re- proof*, vigorous *Perswasion*, good *Examples*, and fervent *Prayer*: And even after all, in not being *Discouraged*, or *leaving them off*, but in waiting and hoping, and continuing such kind Offices, as we have *Opportunity and Capacity*, towards them, as long as they or we live. Which is the best and most proper *Charity* that can be shew'd; and which may be justly *Challenged* from us upon the *Account* of that Love even *vicious Men* have a share in as our *Neighbours*; whereof it is the worst of *Hatred* to defraud them, by *suffering Sin upon them*; the Removal whereof is kindness to the Soul, their better part and greatest Concern, for which they have brutishly cast off all Care and Kindness themselves.

Love

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*Love ought to be expressed to such of our Neigh- The weak.*  
*bours as are Weak* in Judgment and Knowledge,  
whereby they become Scrupulous, Prejudic'd and  
Disaffected towards us, about the Circumstantial  
of Religion, yet agreeing in Fundamentals; whose  
Division must not destroy our *Charity*, which it  
needeth the more, and requires it to be expressed  
towards them, in *bearing with their Infirmities*, Rom. 15.  
without refusing them our Communion, or De-  
spising their Persons, or over-rigidly censuring  
their Mistakes, or provoking them by hard  
Speeches; and in *offering them Instruction*, to make  
them sensible of their Error, to reduce them to the  
Truth, by removing their Prejudices, and recti-  
fying their Mistakes, and yielding them great al-  
lowances and time for this Purpose, that we may  
avoid the Sin of *Scandal*, by doing any thing  
which may either occasion them to commit Sin,  
or discourage, and discompose, and grieve them  
in the Practice of Religion, *Giving none Offence*,  
*neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the*  
*Church of God.*

*Love to the Prosperous*, is expressed in *Congratu-*  
*lation*; which is to *Rejoyce with them that do Re-*  
*joyce*; resenting the Good conferred on another  
as a Blessing and Obligation to our selves; sha-  
ring in in the Enjoyment, as one Member useth  
to do in that Health which another doth immedi-  
ately enjoy; earnestly wishing all well, forbear-  
ing to repine or envy at their Welfare; and  
when we observe any that are well, contributing  
to continue them so, and endeavouring their ad-  
vantage thereby; by faithfully warning them of  
Temptations and Dangers, amidst which they  
are placed on the one hand, and of Opportuni-  
ties and Helps of doing good to themselves, and  
others



others, which they are entrusted with, on the other: Praying for their sanctified Enjoyment of abundance, that they may not be the worse, because God hath been better to them herein, than to many others; and when any shall become better hereby, beholding and imitating their good Deeds, and blessing God for them, with abundance of Delight and Satisfaction.

*The Afflicted.*

*Love to the Afflicted*, though it *Abates* not; yet, it is greatly *Changed* with our Neighbour's Condition; on which it looketh with as sad an Aspect as it is full of Darknes; *Weeping with them that weep*. And therefore, if we cannot redress and remove Trouble, brotherly Love will prompt us to help to bear it in Concern and Sorrow for it; which is *Compassion*, to which all Distressed have a right; and to help where, and what we can, to relieve and ease them of their Affliction, with Endeavours proper and suitable to the kind thereof; whether affecting the *Mind, Good-name, bodily Health, or Estate*.

Phil. 4.

14.

2Cor. 11.

29.

*In Mind.*

If our Neighbour be grieved in *Mind*, whether upon a religious or civil Account, the Love we owe him, will engage us to administer to him, either by our selves or others, seasonable Advice, and proper Reasonings, whereby Light may dispel his Darknes, Comfort may support his Spirit, and Encouragements and Preservatives may ward off Temptations.

*Repute.*

If the Evil be fallen upon our Neighbour's *Reputation*, then our Love to him must express it self in these two Instances especially, viz. In endeavouring to *hide and smother the Disgrace* where it is deserved, by shewing an unwillingness to Hear or Believe, and discouraging the Propagation of any evil Report; it being one Property of *Charity* to

cover

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cover a multitude of Sins; and he that covereth a Transgression, we are told, seeketh Love. And in Vindicating Innocence where it is slandered, by confuting and wiping off the Reproach to the Shame and Confusion of the Detractors; whereby he may be delivered from that Hatred and Scorn of others, and Trouble, and Burden to himself, which are killing Mischiefs, that no one can willingly suffer to be heaped upon the Head of any he loveth.

If the Evil, again, affect our Neighbour's Body, to In Health. the impairment any way of its Health; then the Love he needs from us, will be express'd to him in seasonable and friendly Visits, not to disturb his little Rest by uneasy Formality, or impertinent Discourse, but to administer some way to his Infirmary, either by good Advice, or skilful Application, or willing Attendance; not refusing thus much even to the meanest, whose Health and Ease are no less dear to them than any others, and whose Lives may be as valuable and serviceable in the World. However, Health is the comfort of Life, whereof none can be pleased to see any destitute whom he loveth.

If the Evil, finally, affect the Estate of our Neighbour, so as to cause Poverty or Want; then Love to him is, seasonably and bountifully to relieve him, if we are able, and according to our Ability, out of our own Estate; and if we are not able our selves in Estate, then to be so much the more industrious in our Endeavours to perswade and engage others all we can to Beneficence towards him; earnestly recommending him to all we know are able; whereby a Man may do good not only according to his Power, but in a manner beyond it; making the Abilities of others to

supply his own Weakness, and being liberal with their Wealth. And thus indeed the poorest Man may become a great Benefactor. And so the poor Apostles, who had nothing, yet did enrich many. And he that had not where to lay his own head, enriched the whole World, being the most bountiful Person that ever lived, who for our sakes became poor, that we by his Poverty might be made Rich. And this Instance of Brotherly-love is, what falls under the Duty of *Alms-giving*, which is so considerable a part of *Charity*, that it hath deservedly engrossed the very Name it self; being most acceptable among Men, and best rewarded by God at present, of all other Expressions thereof.

Our Inferiour.

If our Neighbour be below us, whether in Place or Quality, no distance can deject him beneath our Love; which like the Sun casts its Rays downwards on the vilest Weed, as well as on the tallest Cedar; encouraging the Meanest by a due Esteem, as being valuable and amiable for his very Nature, impress'd with the Image of the most High, and who therefore cannot be despised without Sin; and condescending to the Needs of all by ready Help and humble Offices; by Love, serving one another. Whereby the glorious Angels vouchsafe to minister to us their Inferiours; which brought down the Son of God from Heaven for our sakes; and makes the God of Heaven stoop to preside continually over us, and all our Concerns. Love ever either finding or making the Object, it inclines towards, its Equal or Superiour, it never vaunting it self, is not puffed up.

Prov. 14.  
21.  
Gal. 5.  
13.

1 Cor. 13.  
4.  
Our Equals.  
--vers. 5.

In respect to our Equals, with whom we ordinarily converse, Charity doth not behave it self unseemly, so as to breed disturbance among Men, or render them disaffected towards us, but is the most



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most polishing and civilizing Disposition; being the Mother of Friendship and Union; the *very Bond* of Peace and all Society; expressing all Gentleness and Candour and Affability and Kindness both in Word and Deed.

*Towards Strangers*, it shews *Hospitality*, without *Strangers* *grudging*; which is so considerable a Duty of 1 Pet. 4.9. Christianity, and so acceptable to the Founder of it, that our Lord tells us, he will resent all such Kindness as done to himself: *I was a Stranger*, saith he, *and ye took me in* [Not in junketing those, Mat. 25. who neither need nor deserve Harbour, even to 35. Intemperance; but in relieving and cherishing the Destitute, and especially his poor persecuted and banish'd Members, who are driven to us for Succour upon the Account of Religion, and for the Truth's sake;] which is the only *Hospitality*, whereby *some* are said to have entertained *Angels* Heb. 13.2. *unawares*.

*There is also the love of Friendship*; which is of *Friends*. those who love us; consisting in a grateful Sense and affectionate Resentment of Kindness, obliging to Fidelity, and Forbearance, and mutual Trust and Confidence, not only merited but necessitated. Love naturally engaging Love, and one good Turn deserving another; no more to be refused than Humanity is to be defaced. *The very* Luk. 6.33 *Publicans and Sinners, not refusing to do good to those that do good to them.* Every Benefit carrying with it the Force of an Obligation; and therefore to be ungrateful is not only unkind but unnatural.

*Yea, there is a Love due to Enemies*; and that *Enemies*. whether they be so among themselves, or towards us. *If our Neighbours are Enemies to one another*, then our Love to them will engage us to interpose, and endeavour, what we may, to make



- Peace and preserve Amity ; by striving to recommend the great Blessing of *Peace*, by seasonable Counsel and our own Example ; by a discreet and timely curing those Mistakes and false Apprehensions which are the first Beginnings of Contention ; making fair Representations of intercurrent Passages, concealing Causes of future Disgust, removing present Misunderstandings, allaying Heats, ending Differences, reforming peevish Minds by friendly Intercessions and pacifick Advices ; which is the *blessed* Work of *Peace-making* our Saviour taught, which makes a Man both *blessed* and a *Blessing*. But if our Neighbour be an Enemy to our selves, yet are not we allowed to be so to him ; who are, however difficultly and against the grain of corrupt Nature, to continue so much Love still for him as to endeavour to make him our Friend, or to desist from his Enmity, by
- 1 Cor. 13. manifesting our *slowness to be provoked*, which is  
5. Meekness and Lenity ; our *easiness to be intreated*  
Ja. 3. 17. and appeased, which is Placableness ; our readiness to *forgive all Injuries* and Affronts that are light ;
- Rom. 12. not *being overcome of Evil, but overcoming Evil with*  
21. *Good* ; and in righting our selves where the Wrong done us is too burthensome or scandalous to be remitted without its due Punishment. Yet, in doing this, our *Charity* will oblige us to much *Long-suffering* ; as being not what we delight in, and to be made use of after other Methods have been tried and proved ineffectual ; and to be very *merciful* in receiving satisfaction ; remitting much of what might be exacted ; never going to the utmost Limits of Power, and Extremities of Infliction, which is Rigour and Cruelty ; whereof the worst Enemy we have, is unworthy.

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To conclude. If our Neighbour be our superiour, Superiors. in State or Quality; the Love we owe him is Honour and Obedience according to the Relation derived upon him towards us by Nature or Constitution; Succouring Father and Mother, submitting to Authority in the King, and all authorized by him; even to all our Governours, Teachers, Spiritual Pastours and Masters; ordering our selves lowly and reverently to all our Betters; expressing our Good-will by the Chearfulness and Faithfulness of our Submission to such.

So various are the Expressions of Love to our Neighbour, according to the different Circumstances we consider him in, comprehending all the Duties of the Second Table, when sincere and extended to its due Measure. And therefore consider we now,

II. The Degree, Extent or Measure of such Love; *What to love another as our selves.* Where the Comparative Term *As* (on which the Vertue of its signification depends) may imply both Conformity or Similitude, and also Commensuration or Equality; Teaching us to love our Neighbour just as we are wont to do our selves, and as much as we ought to love our selves, even with the like Motions of Heart and Degree of Sincerity. And therefore we may learn from our selves how to carry it towards others in all the former respects; and all things whatsoever we would that Men should do unto us, even so ought we to do unto them, this being also the Law and the Prophets, and the Rule for both our Direction and Trial for loving our Neighbour as our selves, which is said to be so. So that then only may we be said to do the one, when we observe the other: And therefore the

*The great Rule of Christian Charity. Mat. 7. 12.*

Explanation and Recommendation of this Rule will fully state and urge that Duty.

Explain'd

The Explanation of this Rule, will teach the full Import of our Duty. And therefore *all things whatsoever*, i. e. in every Action and Circumstance of Life, without Exception, wherein we have any Concern with others; whether in Matters of civil Respect and Conversation, of Kindness and Courtesies, of Charity and Compassion, of Forbearance and Forgiveness, of Report and Representation, of Trust and Fidelity, of Duty and Obedience, of Freedom and Liberty, of Commerce and Contracts, even in *all things whatsoever* this Rule is of force, to which our *Love towards our Neighbour*, being applied, will be such as we owe, and is fit for us to shew towards *our selves*; even what we *would*, i. e. reasonably and lawfully, according to Human Will acting regularly, by whose Dictates alone it is fit for Men to be governed. And therefore not every thing we inconsiderately or extravagantly *would*, but only what a Man in his right Wits and due Sense of his own true Interest and Duty *would* have done to himself, ought we to do to others.

*All things whatsoever ye would that [Men] i. e. Men in general, without respect to this or that particular Person, towards whom Prejudice or Affection may incline us to Partiality: Whatsoever ye, would they [should] i. e. now, or hereafter, should do to you, without any regard to what they may have already done, or what is past. For to do to others, as they have done to us, is not the Rule; because this would too oft oblige to revenge, and is made the Rule of the worst Men's Actions, and is the greatest Offence against this Rule.* For he that revengeth an Injury, mani-  
fests



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feels thereby his Dislike of it; and therefore what he disliketh to be done to himself, and hath so little Patience to bear with, he ought not to do it to any other; but spare his Enemy, because, though he hath not done so by him, yet so we would have had him done by us, and is what any wise Man would desire should hereafter ever be done to himself.

Where by *doing* is to be understood every thing that belongs to Action, as well the inward Dispositions, as outward Expressions thereof. For, the Law of God is spiritual, and designed to govern the Motions not only of the outward but inward Man, being alike *naked and open unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do.* And the Rule Heb. 4. here is *whatsoever ye would that Men should do,* <sup>13.</sup> whether in outward Actions, in Words or Deeds, or in inward Affections, in Thoughts and secret Surmisings of *Heart* towards us, the same ought we to do, both in Deed and Thought towards them; *i. e. Do, or not Do,* grant or deny; the Rule equally holding and obliging both in the *Affirmative* and *Negative*; this being included in that to *do*, if it be what we would have done to our selves; and *not to do it*, if it be what we would have done to our selves. So that the *Negative*, we may observe, intends to restrain Injuries as the *Affirmative* to urge Beneficence; Justice and Equity being enforced by that, as Love and Charity is more directly obliged to by this. And because *Negatives* are more discoverable by Nature, and even Heathens had attain'd by the Light thereof to this Rule so expressed, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*, being sensible that they should not hurt others, because they cannot bear to be hurt themselves; therefore to improve Nature



ture our Saviour express'd the same in a more exalted and extensive Sense, thus in the Affirmative, commanding our Charity not only to restrain Wrong, but to exert good Deeds, so as to do the good to others that we would have done to our selves, as well as to forbear the Injury that we would have forborn towards us.

That is, yet further and finally, only upon supposition of the same Circumstances, whereby we are to make our Condition theirs, and their Condition ours, so as to put our selves into the Case and Circumstances of every Man with whom we have to do; and then *all things whatsoever we would, that Men should do to us*, supposing they were as we are, and we as they, we ought *even so to do to them*, and no otherwise; because, what may be fit for one Man to desire, may not be for another to expect who is in different Circumstances. So 'tis now plain that the Intention of this Rule, depends chiefly upon these two Limitations, viz. *The Regularity of Desire, and Equality of Circumstances*; by which may exactly be measured the *Love to our Neighbour* equalling that we owe to *our selves*.

*Recomm-  
mended.*

*The Recommendation* of which Rule depends upon the manifest Equity of it, grounded upon the *Equality* that is among Men, and the *Advantage* accruing from the Observation thereof. For, among Equals the same Rule equally obliges; and where there is no difference in Persons, neither ought there to be in Treatment. And therefore ought Men to *love one another even as themselves*; because every Man is as themselves, created by the same God, out of the same Substance, fashioned according to the same Original Idea, endow'd with the same Faculties, co-habiting the same Earth,

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Earth, destin'd to the same Mortality. All conspire in the Essential and more Notable Ingredients of our Constitution, and are only distinguished by some accidental and mutable Circumstances of Age, Place, Colour, Stature, Fortune, and the like, wherein we differ as much from our selves in Successions of Time as from others, and for which we are not wont to surcease or abate our Kindness and Value for our selves. And therefore those whom we must thus acknowledge to be equal with our selves, it is but fit for us to *love as our selves*, and to deal with all Men as we would be dealt by. Natures so equal, being obliged to converse upon Terms as equal. And setting aside perverse *selfishness*, which is a corrupt fondness of our selves for some mistaken or conceited Worth, and which is no ingredient of true *Self-love*, no Man will need to love himself better, than he is bound to *love his Neighbour*; which is according to *Desert* or *Want*. More *Love*, than which, *to our selves* will be too much; and less to *our Neighbour*, will be too little. And therefore, as we are commanded to *love God* to the very utmost Degree, even beyond that which is due to our selves; so Nature having taught us to care for self next to him, God hath commanded us to *love our Neighbour*, as much, and as sincerely, as he hath allowed us to *love our selves*. And as all *Charity*, then, short of *Self-love* is defective; so all *Self-love* above *Charity* is excessive. We cannot *love our selves* too much, while we love others equally with our selves; but we shall *love our Neighbours* too little, while we love our selves above them, by detracting from this equal Measure fitted to the whole Human Nature. Wherefore it is the Design of *Christianity* to restrain all  
*Selfishness*

Selfishness; and enlarge Charity, that Affection may be justly shared between our Neighbour and our selves; commanding the strong to bear the Infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves; and every Man not to look on his own things, but also on the things of others. And Charity, we are told, seeketh not her own. Partiality towards Self is inconsistent with Charity, which therefore obligeth us to love one another with a pure Heart fervently; even with an out-stretched Affection, as the word signifies, constraining us either to bring down Self-love to Charity, or to raise up Charity to such a Fervency that both may come to be adjusted in the same even level. And on this depends the Interest and Advantage of Mankind, considered whether as in a Civil or Religious Society; whereby alone can be cured and excluded Violence and Treachery in the one, Hypocrisy and Persecution in the other, which tend to the Destruction of both. Upon which consideration some of the Heathen Emperors were so in love with this Law, as to cause it to be written upon all the most publick Places: And which would all we Christians but admit to be engraven on our Hearts, would secure all our Duty to one another, and reform both Church and State to what we can wish, but despair of ever seeing. To further this what we can, consider we therefore,

Motives  
to love our  
Neigh-  
bour.

III. The Argument in the Text to enforce it. Which is its Equality with the very Prime Fundamental Law of all Religion; To love our Neighbour as our selves, being of like Obligation and Interest, as to love the Lord our God with all our Soul; both equally to be regarded by us.



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1. *In respect to God*; being both equally his *In respect* Command, having the same Divine Authority *to God.* stamp'd upon them. And therefore saith St. John, *Jo. 4. 21.* *this Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother also.*

2. *In respect of our selves*, considering both what *Our selves.* Power we have, and what Need any of us may have thereof, Charity, in its sublimest Degree being feasible, and in the Power of every one to express, how strait and indigent soever his Fortune may be; and there may be Kindness in the Heart, when nothing but Emptiness may be in the Hand: And none but hath been beholden hereto one time or other, and may be again, who never were in need of an Alms. No Creature being born in so much need of Mercy as Man, none being brought up with more care and help, and none living by so much pity and kindness, whose Life from first to last, subsists only by Commerce of kindnesses and mutual help.

3. *In respect of our Neighbour*; who is our Bro- *Our* ther, of one Stock and one Blood with us; our I- *Neigh-* mage and Resemblance, equally amiable as our *bour.* selves; indeed, in a manner, the very same with us, being all but one Substance by miraculous Efficacy of the Divine Benediction diffused and multiplied. But especially,

4. *In respect of the Love we are to yield him*; The love which is of great Importance for both its Worth *we owe* and Benefit, highly recommendable to our Re- *him* gard and Practice. It being,

1. The peculiar Command of our Lord and Saviour; urged by him so earnestly, as if he required no- *Com-* thing more of his Disciples. This, saith he, *manded.* *my Commandment, that ye love one another.* And *Jo. 15. 12.* *this, saith his loving and beloved Disciple, is the* *Mes-*



Joh. 3. 11. *Message which ye have heard from the beginning that ye love one another.* This our Lord made the Argument of his last Prayers; the Legacy he left his Church; and the very Badge of his Religion, to distinguish his Followers by from all the World besides. Yea,

Natural.

2. *It is a Dictate of our very Nature*; so that we must cease not only to be *Christians* but *Men* by disclaiming it. *Humanity* being nothing but Kindness and Compassion, which by the Discipline and Importunity of Sense it instructs and solicits us in. Whence we feel our Bowels touch'd with sensible Pain upon the View of any calamitous Object, and our Fancy disturbed at the Report of any disastrous Accident; insomuch that all Men do violence to themselves, before they can arrive to hardness enough to offer violence against another; and are never more at ease, or better pleased than while performing Acts of mutual Beneficence and Kindness. Which also,

Equitable.

3. *Is what is but just and equitable in it self.* All Men expecting and claiming Love and Respect as their due from others; which if refused, is resented always hardly, and very oft grievously complained of, or retaliated as an insufferable Wrong; yea a moderate Respect and Affection will not ordinarily; we less, satisfy this Natural Ambition, which cannot brook sometimes the least Disregard or Coldness; and which therefore yet more strongly obligeth, in all Reason and Equity, to pay to, what we exact from others, to whom the same Debt is as justly due; nothing being more unreasonable or unequal, than to require from others that Kindness which upon like occasion we are unwilling to render to others. Therefore,

4. *This*

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4. This consequently must necessarily be a Duty very *Delightful*. *easy and exceeding delightful*. Which is just and natural ever being so; Inclination being complied with, the Mind is at ease and serene; and no bodies Life appears more full of Content, than his who neither deviseth Mischief against others, nor suspects any to be contrived against himself; whereas Nature and Conscience cross'd and wrong'd, is always uneasie; which nothing doth more than a State of Enmity, that distracts the Thoughts with solicitous Cares, anxious Suspensions, and envious Regret: The Heart frying in Choler; the Face over-clouded with Discontent; the Tongue jarring with Passion; the Ears filled with discordant Noise, and the whole Frame of Nature shook; and on the Rack where *Uncharitableness* is suffer'd to exercise its Tyranny. And what still further recommends this Duty,

5. It also is the most sure and compendious *Method* *Compendious* of fulfilling all the Duties of Righteousness; as that of loving God is of all the Acts of Piety; wherein they are therefore alike our Concern and Interest; All the Law being fulfilled in one Word, even in this. St. Paul tells us, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*. So that while we do this, we dispatch all the Laws of Justice and Charity, naturally following of Course; which while we neglect, we shall always be behind hand, and do no good Work perfectly, steadily, or in a kindly manner. For indeed,

6. *Tis this imparts the only Worth to all our Acts Valuable* of Righteousness. Without which no Gifts or Graces or good Deeds will be accepted, as *profiting* 1 Cor. 13. *nothing*; and with which every thing becomes good and acceptable. What is done in Love, being *took* in Love; and therefore it is commanded;

manded; *Let all your Things be done with Charity.*  
 Yea,

—16. 14.  
 Accepta-  
 ble

7. *Tis especially gratefull to God; who hath made it the one half of Religion and Service to himself, placing this Command in so near Adjacency to the very first great Law, conjoining the two Tables by it, making Charity contiguous, and, as it were, commensurate to Piety; taking it as a peculiar Expression of Love and Good-will towards himself: Insomuch that our Love to him, he will have manifested by our Love to one another; and hath threatned to punish our Enmities by his Judgments. So that as we value the Favour of God and our own Security, it concerns us to be kind and loving to our Neighbours.* Yea,

1 Joh. 21.  
 Mat. 6.  
 15.

Benefici-  
 al.  
 In this  
 Life.

8. *This, in all Respects, will be vastly Beneficial to our selves, for both this Life and the other. For, the Happiness of this Life is the consequent of Charity, whether Man be considered as single in himself, or as joyned into a Society, whether Civil or Religious.*

To Man  
 singly.

*Singly considered and in himself, Man's Happiness flows from his Charity, both Internal and External.*

*Internally it conduces to his Happiness, by freeing the Soul from those cross Dispositions, and ungovernable Passions, of Anger, Envy, Revenge, Pride, Suspicion, Discontent and Avarice, which vex and disquiet the Mind, and are the usual Harpies that tear out and devour the Comfort of Life, and make it wretched and miserable amidst whatever Enjoyments; by settling Peace and Content, which introduce and administer continual Light and Liberty; and by dignifying and adorning with a Grace, that is hugely Perfective of our Nature, being the Imitation and Copy of that immense*



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immense Love which is the Fountain of all Beings and all Good.

*Externally*, it also makes no less for our Comfort, by guarding from the Mischiefs of *Enmity*; chearing with the accommodations of *Peace and Friendship*; bettering and improving every *Condition*; being the most suitable Disposition to do good with *Prosperity*, and the most agreeable Capacity for compassion and help in *Adversity*; fructifying every *Endowment* by useful Exercise; and sharing the *Felicity of all Others* even to our selves.

As join'd in *Society*, consider'd as *Civil*, the welfare of a *State* depends on nothing so much as the due Exercise of *brotherly Love*; a neglect whereof would frustrate both the End and Advantages of it. And; considered as *Religious*, the Peace of the *Church* thrives only by Love, being founded on *Charity*. So that Man's *Happiness in this Life*, however consider'd, is evidently the effect of his *Charity*; whose *Love to himself* is never more truly express'd than in *Loving his Neighbour even as himself*. Nor yet only to *this Life* is the Beneficial Influence of this Grace confined; since also,

The *Happiness of the next Life*, which is Eternal, depends upon it; not only as a *Condition*, but as a necessary *Qualification* thereof; whence the uncharitable Man is excluded, and where Admission could not help him to Enjoyment. Heaven being only *Love*, where nothing averse can appear; and Spite and Malice the proper Genius of Hell, where Fury and Revenge inflict the greatest Torment. Therefore, in a Word, as a further Recommendation of this Grace to our Practice, we have,



Exempli-  
fied.

By God.

Pf. 145. 9.

By Christ.

Eph. 5. 2.

Jo. 15. 12.

By the  
Patri-  
archs.

Apostles.

Saints.

9. *This most eminently Exemplified to us*: where-  
to we are therefore obliged in Compliance with,  
and Conformity to the most illustrious Patterns;  
even of *Almighty God himself*, whom to imitate is  
both our Duty and Felicity; and who is declared  
and experienced to be *Good to all, and his tender*  
*Mercies are over all his Works*. Of our dear Lord  
and Saviour *Jesus Christ*; who hath so Loved us, and  
hath given himself for us; and Commanded us to  
Love one another as he hath loved us. Of the Pa-  
triarchs and Prophets, taking such Pains, running  
such Hazards, enduring such Hardships, as we  
read they did, not only for, but from their Coun-  
trymen and Brethren, hereby, evidencing no less  
a Concern for the welfare of others, than they  
could possibly have even for their own. Of the  
Holy Apostles, who following their Master's Steps,  
exposed themselves chearfully to Toil and Dis-  
grace, Wants and Hazards for the Service and  
Interest even oft of those, who did spitefully  
Malign and Cruelly abuse them; *Giving none Of-  
fence, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to  
the Church of God.--But pleasing all Men in all things,  
not seeking their own Profit, but the Profit of many,  
that they may be saved*. Yea, and of the Primitive  
Saints and Christians among whom *Love and Char-  
ity* flamed, even to a Proverb among their Enemies;  
and whereof whole Volumes have been filled with  
signal Instances; who parted with their Posses-  
sions, and some with their very Lives for one a-  
nother's sake; all devoting themselves to the Ser-  
vice of God, in the Edification of his People.  
And therefore in the Practice of this Vertue, we  
need fear neither Singularity nor Impertinency; ha-  
ving such a Cloud of Witnesses, to guide and en-  
courage our Endeavours.

And

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And now laying all these hints of Argument *This ob-*  
together, enough will appear to have been said *strusted.*  
to recommend the Practice to any reasonable  
Man, which only *Selfishness* renders Difficult and  
Disregarded. Therefore, it concerns us all,

1. *To cast out Self-Love*; not that, which only *Self-love.*  
is so, consisting in the Love and Care of our Souls,  
which are our selves; but that immoderate and  
carnal Love of our temporal Interest, that makes  
us so vehement and intent upon pleasing our  
Sensual-selves, that we have no regard to any  
Body else.

2. *To beware of Covetousness*; which is the Root *Avarice;*  
of all, both Injustice and Uncharitableness; teach-  
ing Men to be Cruel, Niggardly and Crafty; and  
because uneasie to themselves, to be always dis-  
turbng or envying the Ease of others.

3. *To suppress all proud Conceit of self*; which en-  
grosseth Merit, and depreciates the Worth of all *Pride.*  
others; rendring Men Exceptionous, Impatient,  
Disobliging and Contentious. *He that is of a proud* Prov. 28.  
*Heart, the Wise Man hath observed, to be the 25.*  
Person that *stirreth up strife*: And that *Only*, or --- 13. 10.  
Chiefly, *by Pride cometh Contention.*

4. *To reject Suspitions and evil Surmizings*; *Censori-*  
which feed on Shadows, on Whispers, on Lyes, *ousness.*  
and empty Reports; never wanting Fuel to fo-  
ment them, and always creating Tumult and Com-  
bustion. Insomuch, that he who cannot either  
prudently Dissemble, or patiently digest an Of-  
fence, in human Conversation, where *it is im-*  
*possible but Offences will come*, and occasions for  
Distast be frequently offered; He I say, must ei-  
ther renounce both his Quiet and Charity, or re-  
solve to spend his Life a Recluse in Solitude.

Obtain'd by Prayer. 5. To add hereto a hearty Prayer to God, whose Gift it only is, that Men are made to be of one Mind in an House, working it by the Almighty Influence of that Spirit of Peace, which breaths nothing but Love and Charity, and Good-will among Men. The which our Church hath therefore taught us to call for, in one of her Collects, wherewith we will conclude.

Collect  
for the  
next Sun-  
day be-  
fore Lent.

O Lord, who hath taught us, that all our Doings without Charity are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our Hearts this most excellent Gift of Charity, the very Bond of Peace, and of all Vertues, without which whosoever liveth is counted Dead before thee: Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

SER.

## S E R M O N XXXIV.

O N

## P R A Y E R.

Ephes. vi. 18.

*Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication  
in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all  
Perseverance.*

**A**FTER the Consideration of our three-fold Promise in the *Baptismal Covenant*, our *Catechism* proceeds to Direct to the means and method of Performance thereof, upon the account of Man's Inability without God's *special Grace to do these things*; recommending *diligent Prayer* in general, and the *Lord's Prayer* in particular, for the Attainment of the same.

Accordingly, therefore, we are now to make these things the Argument of Discourse; beginning with *Prayer in General*, enjoined by the Apostle in the *Text*, offering to our Observation these two Particulars, 1. *A Duty*; which is that most comprehensive one of *Prayer*, in all its several Species or Kinds; *praying with all Prayer and*



*Supplication, 2. The due Qualification and proper Circumstances of it, and that in two Particulars, viz: That of Time, which is Always; and that of the manner of Performance, which must be in the Spirit, Watching thereunto with all Perseverance.*

Now, for the Clearing and full Explanation of all these things, and that I may take in the whole Compass of so important a Duty, and leave nothing unsaid, that may seem necessary for a Christian's due Information herein, and so make this Discourse as compleat and profitable as I can; I shall oblige my self distinctly to consider the following Particulars.

I. I shall consider *Prayer as to its Act*; and explain what Exercise it implies and obligeth to.

II. I shall consider *it as to its Object*; and shew to whom alone it is to be directed by us.

III. I shall consider *it as to its Subject*; and inquire into its proper Argument or Matter, whereof it is to consist.

IV. I shall consider *it in its Species or several Kinds*, wherein we are obliged to Pray.

V. I shall consider *it as to its due Qualifications and Circumstances*, and direct you in the mannner of performing it aright, so as it may be acceptable to God, and successful to your selves. And then,

*Lastly*, I shall represent it in its *Obligation*, and thereby urge to the due Practice of it. And more than this, as we shall not need to inquire after, so will a due Consideration hereof, sufficiently instruct us, as our *Catechism* directeth, to learn at all times to call for God's special Grace, to help our Infirmities by diligent Prayer, and as the Text enjoyneth, to Pray always, with all Prayer

and

and Supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all Perseverance.

I. Consider we this Duty of Prayer as barely to its *Act*; that we may understand what kind of Exercise is implied therein, and obliged to thereby. *What Prayer is.* For it being at large, a *speaking to God*, the whole compass of Devotion may be intended by it, whereby, we do immediately address our selves to God, and have a kind of Intercourse and Conversation by Speech, Oral or Mental with him. Whence Temples consecrated to Divine Service, are styled *Houses of Prayer*; *Divine Worship* being but a *Prayer* varying according to the different End of our addressing God, to which, general Reasons equally oblige. And therefore our *Apostle* in the *Text* hath Emphatically express'd it by a *ᾠὴν προσευχῆς*, *Praying with all Prayer*, and every way applying our selves in Devotion to God, as the present occasion may require. And in this large Sence, *Prayer* may be considered as consisting of these four Religious Exercises. *viz. Invocation, Confession, Petition and Thanksgiving*; any one of these singly, and all of them together falling under the Name and Notion of *Prayer*.

1. *Invocation*, is an Humble and Reverential bespeaking him to whom we are about to Pray in his most proper Titles; thereby signifying our due *Esteem* of his most excellent Perfections, most glorious Works, most just and wise Dispensations of Providence and Grace; our *Acknowledgment* of our own intire Dependence upon him, and total Subjection to his Power and Pleasure, together with our *Profession of Faith* in him, and avowing of Service to him, which we owe him as his natural Creatures and Subjects. And herewith

all Addresses to God are rightly prefaced, to affect and awe the Heart, and give God the Glory due unto his Name. And which therefore our Saviour made a part of his Prayer designed as a standing Pattern for our Direction; and which the Saints in all Ages have made a part of their's.

1 King. 8.

23.

2 Chr. 20.

6.

2 King.

19. 15.

Jer. 32.

17.

Matt. 11.

25.

Acts 4.

24.

Confession.

Thus Solomon, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, our Lord, and his Apostles, are recorded, to have prayed. Whereby Invocation seems to become so necessary an Introduction to Prayer, that without it, an Address by such, vile Creatures to Almighty God, would seem rather an Intrusion.

2. Confession, which is the next part we mentioned of Prayer, is according to its proper Latitude and Extent, an Acknowledgment both of our Sins and their Punishment; whether National or Personal; by Enumerating both Original Sin, and also Actual, whether of Omission or Commission, in Thought, Word or Deed; through Infirmary, Presumption, or Ignorance; owning the Aggravations they are clothed with, from their Multitude and Greatness; bewailing the Hainousness of their Kind, and foulness of their Aggravations; recounting the Dangers and Evils they expose to, even External in our Bodies, Name, Friends and Estate; or Internal in trouble of Conscience, or hardness of Heart, and the loss of Blessings, Natural and Spiritual, which the Soul is capable of; or finally, Eternal in the Sufferings of both Loss and Pain in the other Life; making such our Confessions more Generally in publick, and Particularly in private Prayer; not with a Design hereby to inform God, who neither needeth nor is capable thereof, but to Affect our selves with Indignation and abhorrence of Sin, and Resolution to forsake and amend what hath been amiss; with-

out

out which this part of Devotion will be lost ; being not performed *with an Humble, Lowly, Penitent and Obedient Heart*, costing little, and effecting nothing,

3. *Petition* is *Prayer*, in the strictest Sence ; *Petition*, whereby Desire is offered unto God, by way of Request ; having so great a share in our Devotions, that it hath engrossed the whole Name of *Prayer* which comprehends all the Kinds of it : *Prayer and Supplication* being that, in our *Apostles* Phil. 4.6. Notion, whereby we *make known our Requests unto God*. The which as it may be in the behalf, either of *our selves* or *others*, so is it distinguish'd into *Supplication* and *Intercession*.

*Supplication* is petitioning for *our selves* only ; whether for the Aversion of Evil, which then falls under the Name of *Deprecation*, or for the Acquisition of Good, which then strictly speaking is called *Comprecation*, respecting both our *Soul* and *Body* ; only as our Souls exceed in value, so are we to express more Earnestness and Concern for a Supply of their Necessities.

*Intercession* is requesting for *others* also ; in general for *all Men*, and particularly for *Kings, Governments, Neighbours, Friends, Relations*, and even *Enemies* : This being the best and most serviceable, and yet the most easie, and not seldom all the Expression of that Universal Love and Charity we are bound in to all Men : All having need of our Prayers, many having well deserved them ; some being capable of receiving Benefits no otherwise from us ; and we no other way rendring our Addresses so acceptable to God, as accompanying them with such a Spirit of Universal Love and Charity.



*Thanksgiving.*

4. In a word, *Thanksgiving*, is an acknowledgement of Mercies received, and an humble Remonstrance to God of our Well-pleasedness both with the Gift and Donor : And therefore if our *Wants* require our *Prayers*, then the *Supply* thereof necessitates our *Praises*, in order to render our Address both compleat and effectual ; which in Event and Tendency are themselves Petitions, and so in the strictest Sense a formal Prayer ; since a grateful Reception of Past-favours is certainly the greatest Inducement to future Kindnesses. The most successful Beggar is a thankful Receiver ; who offers Encouragement, and lays an Obligation for more Credit, by punctually paying off Old Scores. And therefore to *pray* is also to be truly *thankful* for Mercies, and that as extensively as our *Wants* were, which we *pray'd* against, and they have supplied ; whether in our own *Persons*, or any other *private Person*, or more publickly in *Church* or *State* ; *Spiritual* or *Temporal* ; of whatever Kind, or in whatever Degree.

To *pray*, then, is, at large, to worship God either by avowing his Sovereignty in *Invocation*, or humbling our selves before him for our Infirmities and Miscarriages in *Confession*, or begging Help and Mercy from him in *petitioning*, or owning and rejoycing for our Receipt hereof in *Thanksgiving*. The right Performance of any one of these Holy Duties, in whatever Particular of them, is the *Act of Praying*, and the Celebration of them altogether is also a *Praying* --- with all *Prayer*.

God the only Object of religious Prayer.

II. The Object hereof, hath already been sufficiently both intimated, and supposed to be only God ; to whom *Prayer* is a speaking, and hath been

been considered by us only as a *Religious Act*, as distinguished from those *Prayers* we use to one another, which are only *Civil Acts*, expressing *Respect*, which is both commendable and necessary, issuing from *Charity*, and quite alien from *Devotion*. Whereby therefore we are obliged to the Advertency of these two Cautions, to render our *Prayers Religious* and Acceptable, viz. 1. *To pray, in way of Worship, to no other but God.* And, 2. *To conceive of God a right*, according to what he hath discovered himself to us to be, in all such our Addresses to him by Prayer.

1. *God only is to be worshipped by Prayer*, which is his Peculiar, it ascribing Divinity to whatever Object it is directed. And, therefore, to avoid the Guilt of *Idolatry*, this Duty directly condemns and warns against the Absurdity and Sin of Praying to any Creature, whether *the Host of Heaven, the Beasts of the Field, and inanimate Creatures*, which is the *Idolatry of Heathens*, and the lowest to which Humanity could stoop; utterly renounced in *Christendom*, where yet the *Object of Prayer* is no less mistaken; even by some who *pray to Saints departed, to Angels, Images and Devils*. For, such *Christians* there are persisting in this most Unchristian Practice, who will allow none to be good Christians besides themselves; having composed Forms of Prayer to their several *Saints*, i. e. Men who living were esteemed vertuous, and being dead are Canonized; (which Errour was Originally the Heathens, who worshipped their Hero's and Emperours after Death, for the Favours they did while they were alive) to whom more Prayers are offered than even to God himself; there usually going ten *Ave Mary's* to one *Pater-Noster* in making up their Rosaries; and to some,

*To Pray  
to any o-  
ther is  
Idolatry.*

some, who, for ought can be known, were either never Saints on Earth, neither in Being at all, or may be now Fiends in Hell; to whom sacred Offices, Places and Times are set apart, without any one word of Scripture, or Example of Christ and his Apostles, or the Primitive Christians for the first three hundred Years to warrant them. Neither are *Angels*, to whom they also pray, other than Creatures; whom the Heathens formerly adored in the Worship of their Dæmons; neither allowed by God, nor desired by those Excellent Beings: The *worshipping of Angels*, being an early Errour in the Church, is expressly forbid in Scripture, where also we have several Instances of *Angels* refusing to receive it from Men. And *Prayer to an Image* is but still a further Improvement of Heathenism; notwithstanding all the Distinctions invented to excuse it from Idolatry, (which yet have been sufficiently manifested to be no other than the Heathens used themselves in the same Case) and is as point blank against the *Second Commandment* as a deliberate and malicious killing of a Man is against the *Sixth*; which therefore is omitted in most Popish *Catechisms* and other Manuals of Devotion, dividing the *Tenth*, into *Two*, to make up the Number of the Commandments, the better to impose upon the common People herein. But the most gross and execrable Idolatry is of them, who *pray to the Devil*; as do they who enter into any League and Correspondence with him, to invoke and consult him, and by any wicked Arts to implore or make use of his Help and Assistance. Neither yet are the fore-cited *Christians* altogether unsuspected of doing the same thing, though not intentionally yet effectually, while worshipping the many  
 strange

Col.2.18.

strange Apparitions, they boast to have had, of the blessed Virgin and of other Saints among them; represented, very probably, by the grand Deceiver only, to confirm them in their damnable Errours.

These are all false *Objects of Prayer* to be rejected by us; who are to direct our Devotions to none other but God; which therefore also obligeth us,

2. *To conceive of God aright*, according to his *Mental* Revelation of himself, and our own Capacity, in *Idolatry*; all such our Addresses to him by *Prayer*. For true Worship pre-supposes and necessitates clear Knowledge of the Object worshipped; otherwise it will not be God, but some vain created Fiction of our own dark and deluded Minds that is thereby worshipped for him; whereby we shall become guilty of *Mental Idolatry*. And since it is requisite to make some Representation of God to our selves, (it being otherwise very difficult, if not altogether impossible to keep up the Intention of our Spirit, and to prevent the Minds straying and gadding in Prayer) our Care must be that it be only according to Truth, as he hath discovered himself to us in his *Works* of Creation and Providence, and in his most holy *Word*, by his *Attributes* which express his very Nature; and when we know them, we know as much of God as can be known by us in this imperfect and distant State. For though the *Scriptures* frequently ascribe to God the Members and Lineaments of a Man, yet as we are not to believe such properly appertaining to the Divine Essence, (which was the old exploded Heresie of the *Anthropomorphites*) so neither are we allowed to delineate him in any Corporeal shape thereby, being spoken af-  
ter



ter the manner of Men, in Condescension to our Capacity, and to be understood only as *becometh the Majesty of God*; whom therefore to shape by such a finite Form, would be to *worship* him, and to set up an Idol of our own making in his stead. And therefore though God was incarnated and became Man, yet will not even this warrant us to pray to him as Man, but as *God-Man*, the Second Person in the *Blessed Trinity* and Saviour of the World. So that the *Object of Prayer* is not confineable to any bodily shape, neither so much to any Idea or Imagination in the Fancy as Reverence in the Heart proceeding from an exalted Apprehension of what exceeds all Imagination, and when then we have collected our Thoughts, and extended them upon Contemplation of an Infinite *Justice*, Infinite *Mercy*, Infinite *Truth*, Infinite *Power*, *Purity*, *Knowledge*, and the like, then may we securely *fall down* and adore *before the Lord our Maker*; such a Being, being our God the *Hearer of Prayers*, unto whom *all Flesh* may only come, as to the proper Object of Divine Worship.

What we  
are to  
pray for.

III. The *subject Matter of our Prayer*, wherewith we are to address such a Being, is variable according to the several Parts whereof we have already observed it to consist. And therefore the proper Argument of *Invocation* is the Holy Name and Attributes of God; whereby himself hath taught us to know and call upon him; becoming the Majesty and Perfection of the Supreme Being, not to inform or flatter; or awaken God to Attention, but to awake and over-awe our selves by a due Sense of his Greatness before whom we Worship. Of *Confession*, the proper Argument is the

the Guilt and Punishment of Sin ; wherein Truth ought to direct and govern, so as to restrain us from excusing or Palliating, and lessening our Crimes, also to caution us from falsely accusing our selves, or aggravating our Faults beyond what is Truth. For as there are none but have Truth enough to humble them by Confession before God, so to say more than Truth would be to aggravate Guilt by a Lye. The Argument of *Petition*, is ever either the *Aversion of Evil*, or *Concession of some Good*. Wherein the following Rules are to regulate our Desires.

I. *No Evil ought to be the Subject of Request, ei-* <sup>*Not for*</sup>  
ther for our selves or others, before God ; and <sup>*Evil.*</sup>  
therefore neither the *Evil of Sin*, nor the *Evil of Affliction*. To pray for *Sin*, is to ask of God to dishonour himself, and undo us ; to pray for *Affliction*, in regard to *our selves*, will be Foolhardiness, and towards *Others* Cruelty and Uncharitableness. For, however instrumental of Good *Affliction* may prove to our selves, and however Content and Thankful it becometh us to be for it when befallen us ; yet being an Evil, and no desirable thing in it self, and withal attended with many Temptations ; we ought not to run our selves upon it, nor over-hastily desire, what God only can turn to our Good, who only knows its proper Season, and hath reserved the Freedom of Dispensing it wholly to himself, which otherwise tends to our Hurt. And we much more being Ignorant of the Spiritual Necessities of *Others*, cannot be supposed to *Petition* for any one's Affliction out of Love. Which yet is judged not to derogate from the Lawfulness of Imprecating the Divine Vengeance upon others out of Love to God, and Zeal for the publick Prosperity, especially

cially in these four Instances: Even, 1. *Where the Quarrel is National*, and where War is lawful, Prayer for Success, and for the overthrow of an Enemy is lawful also. 2. *Where the Good of the publick Necessitates the Destruction of Criminals*; Charity to the Community lays a precedent and higher Obligation, than that we owe to private Persons; and in which Case wishing Evil, cannot be more contrary to the Rules of Charity, than inflicting it. 3. *When gentler Methods will not reform*, it is but Charity to pray for sorer Judgments on the obstinate. And, Lastly, *Where the Obstinate are apparently incorrigible and past Repentance*; whom Patience and Kindness cannot soften, nor Prayers for their Conversion do any good upon them, it seems agreeable to the Doctrine and Examples of the Scripture, as well as to the Practice of the best Christians in all Ages of the Church, when Charity is prevented, and Mercy rejected, to refer them to Justice, whereby God may be Glorified, and his Church delivered from unreasonable and cruel Men. In which Instances, though the *Scriptures* afford sufficient Warrant and Authority to pray for Affliction to others, yet not as an *Evil* but as a *Mercy*; an *Evil* it may be to the particular Person it falls on, but a Blessing it is intended and desired to be to the Publick; which supersedes the Notion of the private Evil, and constitutes it a necessary and most desirable Blessing. So that notwithstanding the Allowances for Imprecations in such exempt Cases, the Rule still holds good; and as we have no Warrant to pray for Affliction to our selves, so neither have we, out of private Grudge or Ill-Will, purely for its Evil's Sake, to desire it for any other. Neither,

Pf. 59. 13.  
---83. 16.

2. *Is any Good thing to be desired from God by us, any further than he hath promised to give.* Because as God alone is able to determine what is good for us, so the Subject of his Promises is the only means we have to know what he hath so determined. For, what God hath not promised to us, we can have no reason to expect from him; and what he with-holds we may conclude is not fit for us, either to Ask or Have. Petitions therefore of unpromised Benefits, are unwarrantable, neither to be made nor answered. Only for promised Good.

3. *Of Promised Good things, such as are Spiritual* Especially  
*are to be begg'd in the first Place, and such as are* Spiritual.  
*Temporal only Secondarily.* Because, Those are of most value, and most needed; and which being secured will not fail to procure for us, though, it may be, not all we desire, yet all we want, or is fit for us to have of these. Therefore in our *Deprecations* the chief matter to be regarded and insisted on by us, must be the Aversion of *Spiritual Evils*, that are dishonourable to the Glory of God, and hurtful to our own Souls. Such is the *Evil of Sin* and the *Evil of its Punishment*. The *Evil of Sin* is what we are especially concerned to pray against, both because it is the greatest Evil that can befall us, and what we are in continual Danger of, and no wise able of our selves to escape or overcome; and this consists in its *Guilt and Power*. Its *Guilt* must be Deprecated; contracted whether by *Inclination* or *Act*, we begging *Forgiveness* as to what is past, and *Divine Grace* for the Time to come, to preserve us from its Power; to support us under Temptations, and to overcome whatever of them we shall be tried by; arising whether from the Corruption of Nature, the Malice and Subtility of the Devil, or the  
P
Allure-



Allurements and Terrors of the World. *The Evil of Sins Punishment* is the consequent of its unpardoned Guilt, and conquering Power; stirring up the Wrath of the Almighty, and creating Horror and anguish of Mind, pursuing with Revenge both in this World and for ever. In the Aversion whereof as we are to be principally concern'd, so when we have been so, nothing forbids us Deprecating all Evils incident to the *Body*; only with this reserve, so far as God shall see it consistent with the good of our Souls to his own Glory. Otherwise an Immunity from Temporal, will prove a Spiritual Evil; which in this Case, ceases to be Evil which we ought to be so far from desiring the Aversion of, that on the contrary we ought to think it *all Joy*, and to be exceeding glad, when the *Body* suffers for God's Honour and the Soul's Good. *In our Comprecations*, in like manner, we are first to implore *Good for our Souls*, tending to perfect them in their Apprehensions of and Assimilation to God; begging of him a due Understanding of his Word, where both his Nature and our Duty are described; a ready compliance of our Will with his in every thing; regular and devout Affections; a sanctified Nature, and Perseverance, and Increase in his Grace and Favour to our Lives end. Next, and in subservience hereto, we may also request *the Good of our Bodies*, in Provision for, and Protection of them; in our Persons, Callings, Reputation, Friends and Estate; in the Welfare whereof, the Soul's Welfare is also concern'd; and therefore are such things to be beg'd only conditionally in reference to the *Soul's Good*, and *God's good Pleasure*, which are the Conditions they are only promised to us on; and to Ask contrary to *This*,  
would

would not be to Petition but Invade ; and without regard to *That*, we should but beg a Curse instead of a Blessing. To compleat these Rules, it must also be observed,

4. *That all such Petitions have relation only to Persons Living and not to the Dead:* Being Mercies the Living only are capable of, as they tend to alter and change their State and Circumstances, and of bad and wretched, to make good and blessed Men. Which is Impious and Ridiculous to expect of those that are already departed this Life, and have received their Doom, and is only a foppish consequent upon the Politick Figment of a Purgatory. *The Argument in fine, of Thanksgiving is Mercies, or good things received ; as that of Petition was the Good we wanted.* Till it be *Received*, it is the Object of our Desires, and nothing but what is either in Reality or in Apprehension *Good*, comes under the Notion of a *Benefit*, which is the only proper Object of Gratitude: Therefore 'tis Mercies receiv'd, that the thankful Mind only looketh on, whether for Soul or Body, for this Life or a better, of whatever kind; and in whatever Degree ; whereby Dependence upon God is owned, the Glory due unto his Name rendred, and future Mercies to our selves secured.

Not for  
the Dead:

*The subject matter, then, of Prayer, according to the Religious Exercises it implies, is, you see, The Holy Name and Nature of God ; Our own and Other's Sins against him ; The Spiritual and Temporal Wants of promised Good things to our selves, and living Fellow-creatures ; and the Spiritual and Temporal Receipts of Mercies, that have supplied such Wants in our selves and others: The First exciting our Invocation, the Second exercising our*

*Confessions*, the Third necessitating our *Petitions*; and the Last employing our *Thanksgiving*.

Kinds of  
Prayer.

IV. *The Species and Kinds of Prayer*, arise from the Maker or Utterer of them, whose either *Mind* alone (the Operation whereof Prayer properly is) is employed therein; which then is called *Mental Prayer*: Or the Service of the *Tongue* is also added, which sometimes is necessary, and then it becomes *Vocal Prayer*: Which if performed *Alone*, is *Private Prayer*; but if joyned in by *More* is then called *Publick-Prayer*; which yet further is, either such as the Members of the same Family joyn in together in their House, and therefore called *Family-Prayer*; or such as the Members of the same Profession offer up by many Families together in the Church, properly called *Common Prayer*. So that hence there appears to be four Kinds into which Prayer is wont (how properly is not material) to be distinguished, viz. *Mental Vocal, Private and Publick Prayer*.

*Mental.*

1. *Mental Prayer*, is the Offering of the Heart alone; to which God being privy is as capable of being addressed with, as by the loudest Calls of the *Tongue*; without which, he, who is a pure Spirit, cannot be addressed at all; so that as all Prayer ought also to be *Mental*, so if it be no more, it nevertheless is *Prayer*. Yea, such as in some Cases is most Efficacious and Necessary; even when we may be most disposed for this, and altogether incapable of performing any other sort of *Prayer*; which no crowd of Business or Diversion can hinder; which is always ready to serve a sudden turn, and carry up our Desires to God in an instant; mixing it self with all our Employment, and continuing the thred of Devotion intire; which therefore all ought to Familiarize

size to themselves; that as wordly Cares and Desires do often intrude and creep into our Devotions, to distract and defile them; so Spiritual Affections, and Holy Wishes may insinuate themselves into all our Secular Concerns to hallow and improve them. Thus therefore we read of holy Men of old, addressing God in *Prayer*; as *Abraham's* Servant for success in his Masters business; *Moses* interceding for the *Israelites*; *Nehe-* Gen. 24.  
45.  
Exod. 14.  
15.  
Neh. 2. 4.  
*miah* being about to request the King; there being always need and opportunity of darting up good Wishes into Heaven, amidst the Dangers and Difficulties we converse with here on Earth; whence also this kind of Prayer, is also called *Ejaculatory*.

2. *Vocal Prayer*, to the intention of the *Mind* Vocal.  
addeth the Expression of the *Tongue*; which though not necessary to help God to the Notices of the Heart, yet is requisite to give him the due Service of this excellent Member in its proper Exercise; and thereby to excite our own Affections, and add to our internal Fervour, and fix that natural Levity and Desultoriness of the Mind, which makes it wander when alone, if extended to any considerable length in *Prayer*, unaccompanied with Words, and is the only means of making *Prayer*, *Publick* so as to be serviceable to many at once, and thereby become more acceptable to God. Accordingly we find the *Scriptures* mostly representing *Prayer* under the terms of *Calling upon*, and *Crying*, and *lifting up the Voice to God*: So that as *Mental Prayer* is chiefly useful in sudden and short flashes of Devotion, so *Vocal* is adapted to the more solemn and extended Acts of Worship.



Private.  
Mat. 6.6.  
—14. 23.  
Act. 10. 9.  
Dan. 6.  
108

3. *Private Prayer*, is what every Man solemnly performs by himself in his Retirement ; which is therefore called *Closet-Prayer* ; expressly commanded by our *Saviour*, and recommended by his *Example*, followed by his *Apostles*, and practised by devout Men of old ; necessitated by private and personal Exigences ; and requisite to approve the Sincerity, and raise the ardour of holy Affections, and prepare and dispose for more solemn and *Publick Adoration*.

Publick.

4. *Publick Prayer*, is what is made in Conjunction with others ; founded on the *Law of Nature and Reason*, with respect to that Interest we have in each others Welfare, as Members of the same *Society*, and more peculiarly on the *Law of Christianity*, with respect to that Interest we have in each others Welfare, as Members of one *Holy Catholick Church*. And this again is varied according to the relation a Man stands in herein. For though every Man is a Member of the whole human Race, and every Christian of the whole Catholick Church, and is obliged therefore, a Decency and Order will allow, joyntly to offer up Prayers to God in the most publick manner : Yet is every Man also a more particular Member of some more Select and private Society of Men or Christians, with whom he is, upon the same ground no less, still further obliged to communicate in *Prayer* to God their common Founder. Upon which account *Publick Prayer* is, either such as Members of the same Family ought to joyn in together in their *House* ; or such as are Members of the same Profession offer up, by many Families together in the *Church*.

Family-  
Prayer.

*Family-Prayer*, is, wherein all the Members of the same House, who live together ought to joyn together

together, in a distinct kind of Address to God, suitable to the distinct Mercies and Necessities of such a Society; and which can no where else properly be acknowledged, nor in any other acceptable manner; warranted both by Scripture-Precepts and Examples. *Church-Prayer* is wherein many Families of the same Parish, or rather all the Members of the Holy Catholick Church do publickly communicate; to the greater Honour of God, and Interest of Religion, in the Unity of the Church, and universal Charity of its Members; uniting hereby the strength of their Prayers, and raising each others Devotion from Example; being guided through the most admirably prepared Offices, wisely fitted for all the Wants of a devout Worshipper, by a consecrated Person, whose Office it is to draw nigh unto God, as the Mouth of the People, and to pronounce Absolution and Blessing upon the People, as the *Ambassador of God*.

In all which *kinds of Prayer*, that we may, as opportunity and occasion shall require, without commuting one for another, faithfully and acceptably Address the *Throne of Grace*. We come now to consider

V. *The due Qualifications and Circumstances of Prayer*; recommended in the *Text* in such general Terms as are comprehensive of all the most considerable Appendages thereof. The *Apostle* not only enjoyning *Prayer* in all its Parts and Kinds, but in its right manner, both as to *Time* [*Praying always*] and as to *Frame and Disposition of mind* [*in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance*] exercising all Caution and Reverence in performance thereof; that it may be done *Seasonably and Decently*, with due regard to every thing

that hath a necessary Relation thereto for Direction therein. Wherefore a due Submission to such an Injunction will oblige our Observation of the following Particulars, containing the principal *Qualifications* and *Circumstances* of this Duty of Prayer, viz. The *Frame of Spirit*; the *Posture of Body*; the *Form of Words*; the *Place*; and the *Time and Frequency* proper thereto.

- Frame of Spirit.* 1. *The Frame of Spirit*; (whose work Prayer is and in which we Pray, when we pray at all) consisteth in *Purity of Heart*, from all Affection to *Sin*; which while regarded there, *God will not hear*, In profound *Reverence*; made up of an holy Fear of God, and humble Conceptions of our selves, suitable to his Majesty and our own Vileness; the
- 51. 17. *Sacrifices of the Lord being a broken Spirit.* In Faith and Hope to obtain what we pray for, according to the Divine Will, as a necessary Tribute due
- 1 Tim. 2. to the Bounty and Faithfulness of God; unto
8. whom holy Hands are enjoined therefore to be
- Ja. 1. 6, 7. lifted up without doubting, and Men to ask in Faith
- Pf. 17. 1. nothing wavering. In Sincerity and Truth; without Ostentation or Hypocrisie, purely in Submission to Duty and necessity, praying out of unfeigned Lips. In close and unwearied Attention; Watching diligently to prevent or correct all Distraction and wandring of Thoughts; it being unreasonable to expect that God should have regard to those Prayers, to which we have no regard our selves. In Fervency and Importunity; it being only the fervent Prayer, though of a righteous Man, that availeth much. And, to compleat and render all acceptable, in offering all our Requests and Services to God, only in the Name of Christ; even with such a regard herein to him as to acknowledge, heartily and thankfully, our hope of Success,

Success, of Acceptance, Favour and Reward with God, to be grounded wholly on him, to be procured by his Merit and Means, and to be bestowed on us only for his Sake, in *whom we have free Access to the Throne of Grace*, and have a Promise to be heard only *asking in his Name*.

Eph. 1.6.  
Joh. 14.  
13, 14.  
16.23,24.  
*Posture of the Body.*  
1 Cor. 6.  
20.

2. *The Postures of Body*; the Service whereof God requires to be glorified with, as part of his Purchase bought with a price; without the concurrence whereof Prayer will not be likely to be, either so affectionate or so acceptable; and where-with therefore devout Men have ever been watchful to address and honour God in Worship: Which are referrable either to the whole, or to some particular parts of the Body.

*Those Gestures belonging to the whole Body*, used by the Church of God, as proper to express the right Frame of Spirit, in Prayer, are such as standing, kneeling, prostration and turning towards some particular Place or Quarter of the Heaven; which among the Jews was Jerusalem where the Temple stood, and among the Christians, from very early time to this Day, hath been the East. *Those Gestures, peculiar to only some parts of the Body*, received and observed, in Prayer, as uncovering the Head in Men, lifting up or casting down the Eyes, expanding the Hands, and smiting the Breast. All which are very significant, at least innocent Gestures of Devotions. Whereas, some others, mightily affected by some that would seem more than ordinarily devout, are purely Theatrical. Such are an uncouth Variation of Tone, comical Distortions of the Countenance, hideous Sighs and Groans, and industrious Sqveezings for some drops of Tears; which for their Singularity, unnaturalness; and too much favouring of Ostentation, what-



whatever use may be indulged hereof in private, appear very improper and impertinent for *Prayer in Publick*. Where the less Gesture there is, so there be enough to express Reverence, and the more modest it be, doubtless it is the better and more suitable to a *Spiritual Service*; which ought chiefly to be attended to, and *Bodily Posture* not to be neglected, so far as may express and assist it. Therefore endeavouring, in the first place, to have a rightly disposed mind for Prayer; it will become and concern us to attend this, as we have Opportunity and Affection, with the devoutest Gestures of the Body; thereby expressing our intent and willingness, to give God the Service of our whole Man, and our Conscience not only to own him, but our Confidence to shew that we do so, and our Desire to provoke others thereto, by rendring our Devotion as affecting and exemplary as we can, agreeable to the Nature and Use of all religious Gestures.

Form of  
Words.

In a  
known  
Tongue.

3. The form of Words most agreeable to Prayer, hath respect to both their *Quality* and *Quantity*. As to their *Quality*, the words of our Prayers ought to be *Intelligible*, and generally *Premeditated*. They must be *Intelligible* that it may be Prayer. For to pray for we know not what, is not to utter our own Desires, but another's strange Words; wherein, though sometimes there may be something of *Charm*, yet there cannot possibly ever happen to be any thing of *Religion*; which is a *reasonable Service*, and the work of the Understanding, and not barely of the Lips. Wherefore Worship in an *unknown Tongue*, was prohibited even in the *Apostle's Days*; when though there was the *Gift of Tongues*, yet the help of an

1 COR. 14. Interpreter was then enjoyned, as necessary to Pray  
55. with

with the *Understanding* also; which, now such miraculous *Praying with the Spirit* being ceased, is the only way we can pray at all; there being no Religion, nor reason in Prayers not understood. The words likewise of our Prayers ought generally to be *Premeditated*. Which is necessary, *A set Form.* considering natural Infirmities, the multitude of our Wants, the Treachery of our Memories, the dulness of Invention, and Desultoriness of Thought and Phancy, and the ceasing now of either Promise or Necessity, of immediate Inspiration of both the matter and words of Prayer, as was in the first times of the Christian Church. Considering this, it is necessary, I say, to premeditate and study our Compositions for Prayer, or else to make use of such Prayers as have been so study'd by others, that so we may serve God in the best manner we can hereby; which cannot but be better than by *Extempore* Expressions; which are uttered in hast, and oft in Fear, or are apt to favour too much of Pride or Self-confidence, and frequently give great Offence to them that are to joyn therein, through the Mistakes and Impertinences they are lyable to. In respect to the *Quantity* of the words whereof our Prayers are composed, Care ought to be had against their *Prolixity* and *Superfluity*; to avoid *much speaking*, condemned by our Saviour, beyond what there is Matter and Affection for, meerly for Ostentation sake of *pretended* Gifts of Devotion; and to prevent *vain Repetition*, or Tautologies, censur'd by Christ therewith, as Heathenish and Pharisaical.

4. *The Place appropriated to Prayer*, though not determin'd in the *Text*, yet being a necessary Circumstance of Action, must be resolved on by our selves *Places of Prayer.*

Matt. 6.

7.

--23. 14.

selves. For in whatever kind or manner of Prayer we address God, it must necessarily be in some place or other; and *though every Place is alike free*; (Devotion in General, being restrained to no particular Place, which ought to be exercised upon occasion, any where and every where) yet *some places are more fit and proper for some kind of Prayer than other*, whereto it hath a more peculiar Relation; as the *Closet* is directed to by our Lord for secret Prayer, and the House mentioned in the Character of *Cornelius's* Devotion by St. Luke for Family-Prayer; and not only the Law of Nature, but the Word of God hath dictated the Provision of more *Publick Places*, capacious and convenient for assembling in greater Numbers, for *Publick Prayer*; and *such Places we ought to make choice of, and distinguish* by restraining and suiting, in a due manner, our Devotions to them; as of God's appointment, or our own Dedication; where they are most proper, and may be best perform'd with most *Decency and Order*.

Matt. 6.  
6.

Act. 10.2.

*Times of  
Prayer.*

5. Lastly, *The Time and Frequency* whereof the Text expresseth to be *always*, and enjoyns its Practice *with all Perseverance*; in every opportunity, upon all just occasions, continuing constantly Punctual herein; which, in Scripture-account, amounteth to this, *viz.* That Prayer be made by us *Frequently*, without ever suffering any large space of Time to pass without it; and the oftner, so it be rightly performed, the better. That, to this end, it be limited by us to certain, *appointed and conveniently distant Periods of Time*; to be determin'd by an honest Prudence, according to Men's several Circumstances and Capacities; whereby the Duty may not be left at Random, nor Practised only by the by, as it were by chance,

chance, or as Fancy takes us; but its Constancy may be secur'd, and its Practice inured, and leisure and opportunity thereto be never wanted or forgot by us. That; moreover, we Practice this Duty upon every *Emergent Occasion*; rendring it necessary, Seasonable and *Acceptable*, being inwardly disposed, or outwardly moved thereto, by good Affections and extraordinary Providences. And, Finally, *That we herein persist till our Requests are Granted, and holy Desires accomplished*; never laying down our Suit through weariness or impatience, whatever Demurrs may intervene, so long as we live. *Our Eyes waiting upon the Lord our God, until that he have Mercy upon us.* Therefore as the *Time of Prayer* ought to be frequent and determined, and as occasions offer, so is it never to end but with our Lives.

Pf 69.19.

Pf. 123.2.

Thus qualified and circumstantiated are our *Prayers* to be, in Order that they may become acceptable to God, and profitable to our selves.

VI. *The Obligation, urging to the Practice hereof*, is grounded on the Party's concerned herein, *Motives to Prayer.* which are only *God and Man.*

I. *In regard to God*, then, our Obligation to Pray to him, in the forecited manner, appears plainly, upon the account of his *Existence*, requiring to be acknowledged hereby; that as *he that cometh to God, must believe that he is*, so he that doth not come to him, must necessarily be supposed to deny his Being; and believe that he is, not. *Heb. 11. 6.* Upon the account of his *infinite Perfections and Majesty*, justly calling for Honour and Adoration. *For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods*; therefore subjoyns the *Psalmist*, *Pf. 95. 3. O come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* Upon the account, further,

Pf. 95. 3.

--ver. 6.



Pf. 135.  
6, 1.

Mat. 7.7

ther of his *Providence, and Munificent care over us*, deserving Acknowledgments of our Dependence on him, which is the Foundation and Encouragement of all Addresses to him. For because *the Lord doth whatsoever he pleaseth both in Heaven and Earth*, therefore *Praise we the Name of the Lord*. And finally, upon the account of his positive and expresse *Command*, necessitating our Submission and Obedience to him herein; who hath made our *Asking* an indispenfible Condition of his *Giving*; and allowed no Title to any Blessings, but what is hence Claimed. Therefore is there no Duty in God's word, to which we are more earnestly exhorted, and in which we are more sensibly encouraged than this of Prayer.

2. *In regard to our selves*, it implies great Honour to us, to be thus admitted and have free Access to the Presence and Ear of God, the King of the Universe. It yields substantial Joy and Satisfaction; being the Soul's Wing, whereon it may mount it self into Heaven, and there feast upon Transports of Delight, yielding a *Peace which passeth all Understanding*, quieting under whatever Pressures, and disburthening the Mind of all its Cares and Desires and Doubts and Anxieties, into the breast of the most kind Friend, most wise Councillour, and able Helper. And it also tends to our vast Gain and Advantage, both for this World and the next; being both the Instrument and Condition of all our Good; working it in us, and begging it for us. The very Rise, Strength, Progress, and continuance of our good Affections and Actions, depending upon the Efficacy of our Prayers; to which, of our selves we have no Ability, yea a great Averseness; and no other means being left us for the Accomplishment of our

our Desires; after which all Men thirst, and none but the Devout obtain.

There seemeth, then, no greater Argument in the World of our Spiritual Danger and Unwillingness to be saved, than the Backwardness which most Men have *Always*, and all Men have *Sometimes* to say their *Prayers*. So weary of their Length! So glad when they are done! So witty to excuse and shift off an Opportunity! And yet all is nothing but using Probable Endeavours to obtain the greatest and best things we can need, or can make us Happy; and is an Employment so Honourable, so Pleasant, and to so good Purpose, that in all the Instances of Religion and Providence, (except only the Incarnation of his Son) God hath not given us a greater Argument of his *Willingness* to have us saved, and of our *Unwillingness* to accept it; of his *Goodness* and our *Gracelessness*, than by rewarding so easie a Duty with so great Blessings. And hereof, indeed, the Generality of Men are so sensibly aware, that as few are to be met, with who *deny the Obligation*, so there are many who are ready to *Excuse themselves from the Practice* of this Duty of *Prayer*. And as, then, what hath been already said, may abundantly suffice to convince the first; so will I now conclude with the Consideration of the most usual *Pleas* alledg'd for the Omission of this Duty, in answer to the other: The which appear to be drawn, either from false *Objections* *Notions*, or external *Avocations*, or internal *Indispositions* prejudicial thereto.

*The false Notions prejudicial to Prayer*, are either concerning Divine Providence, God's immutable Decree, or the frequent *Successlessness* of *Prayer*.

The

*Objection  
the First  
from Di-  
vine Pro-  
vidence,  
against  
Prayer.*

The Objection grounded on *Providence* is this ; that, seeing God knoweth all our Wants, and standeth in no need of Information from us, and is of Essential Goodness enough to supply them of himself without our asking, we shall but seem to doubt either of his Knowledge or Goodness, if we *Pray* to him ; and cannot conceive how our *Prayers* should signify any thing to obtain Blessings from him, which he would not have bestowed without them, especially on good Men, who by their Virtue are Entitled to the Favour and Protection of his Providence, to whom he will do good, according to his own Goodness and their Wants ; whether they ask or no ; and therefore they see not for what wise Ends *Prayer* serves, or how it should be any reasonable Motive for God to give.

*Ans.* In return to this, the Answer will be short and satisfactory ; from considering both the *Duty and Reason of Prayer*. And therefore tho' our *Saviour* doth teach that God who both knows our Wants, and is willing to supply them, yet at the same time both commanding and Encouraging, and teaching how to pray, plainly intimates that, in *Obedience* to the Commandment, and in *Imitation* of the Pattern, and in *Faith* of the Promise to be heard, we are to call upon God, and persist in our Duty whatever can be objected. And the rather because of the knowledge and kindness of Providence ; designing not to free us from our bounden Duty, but only from distrustful Care, that we may have Encouragement in our Duty, and seek to him with the greater Confidence by *Prayer* ; not to inform him in that which he knoweth not, neither to move him to what he is unwilling, but for Obedience and Interest's Sake, to do

Mat. 6.  
--32. 7, 7.

do our Duty to him, and thereby to serve our selves in the way *he will have us*, it being most proper, for high and reasonable Ends, that his Power and Providence may be universally owned and acknowledged by Mankind; that we may live in constant Dependence on him; and be more sensible that what we receive is his Gift; and have thereby restraints laid upon ungoverned Lusts and Appetites; that Success depending upon Prayer, Men may never dare to desire or attempt any thing, for which they dare not Pray. So that not withstanding the Knowledge and Goodness of God towards us, it nevertheless remains necessary to Pray to him upon the Account of Duty, grounded not only on the Will of God, but manifest good Reason.

The Objection grounded on God's immutable Decree against Prayer, is this, That all things coming to pass, only according to the immutable Counsel of God from all Eternity, it must needs be both *Needless*, and *Fruitless* to Pray to him. *The Objection from God's immutable Decree.* *Needless*, if God hath already appointed what we Desire; and *Fruitless* if he hath determin'd the contrary, because by no Request of Man, can a Divine Decree be altered.

*Ans.* To which the Answer is; that the Divine Counsel doth not only ordain what Effects shall come to pass, but also by what Means and Causes, and in what Order they shall flow. Now Prayer being one Means to bring to pass that which God hath not determin'd shall be; we therefore Pray, not out of Hope to alter, but to accomplish God's eternal Purpose, by capacitating our selves to receive, what that hath determined to give by Prayer and not otherwise. And therefore when Ezek. 36; God had promised great Mercies to the Jews, he 37. tells



tells them by his Prophet, Yet will I for this be enquired of by the House of Israel to do it for them. Besides, What God hath Decreed is a Secret, concerning which we know not his Will; but what he hath commanded is revealed, concerning which his Will is made known to us. And far be it from us, under a Pretence of conforming our selves to the secret Will of God, which we know not, to rebel against his revealed Will, which we know. However *Immutable* in fine his Secret Decree may be, yet the Declarations thereof are *Mutable*, because only *Conditional*; so that God is not inexorable; from whom may more certainly be expected whatever Effect can reasonably be expected by Prayer from wise, and kind and good Men, and if Men being Evil, know how to give good Gifts unto their Children; how much more shall our Father which is in Heaven, give good Things to them that ask him? But the most vulgar and mischievous Let to Prayer is

Mat. 7.  
11.

The Objection  
from Successfulness  
of Prayer.

The Objection grounded on the Successfulness thereof, which may be thus represented. That notwithstanding the Promises of God to hear Prayer, and the Command and Encouragements urged upon us to Pray yet 'tis too manifest that those who Pray, most do not always far best; and that good things are as commonly the share of those that do not Pray, as of those that do. Therefore what is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what Profit should we have, if we Pray unto him? For if we do, we may not always be heard, and if we do not, we may fare well as they that do.

Job 21.  
15.

Ans<sup>r</sup>. The Resolution of this Objection consists, in the Discovery of the Falsity of the two Suppositions it is made up of; which is, That  
Prayer

*Prayer get may nothing, and that any thing may be had without Prayer.* Whereas *Prayer* duely qualified can never be Successeſs; nor any thing be had good without it. For God's Promise, that cannot fail, is made only to *Prayer* rightly perform'd. And if we *ask and have not*, it is because we *ask amiss*. The fervent and duely qualified *Prayer* of the righteous always availeth though not always in that *Manner* and *Season* we may expect: Being sometimes made to wait long for an Answer; even till a good Man may begin to be weary with Crying; to Humble for Sin; for the Tryal and Exercise of Faith; to excite more Fervency and Importunity; and to relish Blessings the more when granted; and being oft, it may be, even then answered, when we may be complaining that we are not heard. He satisfying our Necessity, when denying our Desires; and doing for us, tho' not what we would, yet better than we could have asked or thought on for our selves; giving us the Benefit without feeling the Sting of an Affliction: which is really to be heard in what we have reason to Fear; and is much better for us, than to be always gratified in what we are apt fondly to Desire. And what is had without asking (which is the only Condition of having,) cannot be the Blessing either Needed or Desired, or what can make any Man Happy. Enjoyments being sanctified only by *Prayer* without which, they prove in the end the greatest Afflictions and Curses to us. So that though the common Gifts of Providence, are indiscriminately scattered, as the Rain and Sunshine, on the Good and Bad, and are therefore oft received without *Prayer*; yet neither are these sufficient Blessings of themselves, to supply Needs or satisfy Desires; nor yet is the Blessing

Jam. 4. 2.  
5. 16.

Ps. 69. 3.

Eph. 3.  
20.  
Heb. 5. 7.

of them always had with them. Many Men being the more unsatisfied, the more abundance they have hereof ; and no Satisfaction herein signifying any thing to make them Happy, so long as Divine Grace, and well grounded Hopes of Salvation are wanting, which are the most valuable Gifts ; and are never bestowed without *Prayer* ; and which therefore is never Successful in the best things ; nor ever any thing of Moment granted without it. Wherefore if our *Notions* be right, our Duty of *Prayer* cannot seem vain, upon the account either of God's *Providence*, or *Decree*, or our own *Successfulness* thereby.

*Want of  
Leisure.*

*Object. 2. The Objection of external Avocations* is the want of Leisure to attend duely on *Prayer*, through multiplicity or importance of our other *Affairs*.

*Ans.* Which fallſly ſuppoſes, either that *Prayer* is none of our *Buſineſs*, or not of ſo great *Importance* as what may hinder it : Whereas it is a Paying our juſt Debt to God, and a Diſcharge of our Duty to our Maker, our Patron, and moſt liberal Benefactor ; as alſo a Provision for the Health of our Souls, and their everlaſting Welfare ; which is the greateſt Concern we have to mind in the World, the only *one thing neceſſary* ; in compariſon whereto all other Occupations are but meer trifling, and an unprofitable Buſtle that will ſignifie nothing, but to our greateſt Prejudice, if this is neglected ; and which therefore ought to give place, and be quite laid aſide ſo far as they are inconfiſtent herewith ; which yet a little fore-caſt and care will eaſily reconcile ; and reſerve leiſure for Devotion, amidſt the greateſt crowd of Buſineſs, that is not wont to exclude unneceſſary Diverſions, either of Pleaſure or Civility.

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This is also really the greatest furtherance of Business, both in its Dispatch and Success; and to which therefore the wisest and best, of most Employments, have constantly applied themselves; as may be instanced in the Examples of *David*, a King and Warriour; *Daniel*, a principle States-Man; and *St. Paul*, on whom lay the Care of all the Churches; and indeed of all good Men, who of all others, are least without Business; to which, Religion, that enjoyneth Constancy in Prayer, obligeth; both finding *Work* and commanding *Industry*: Requiring all to have some Calling, and to mind our own Business therein; to be Provident for our Families, most Officious towards our Friends, most ready to serve our Country, and most abundant in all Good Works. Which plainly evinceth how reconcileable much Devotion is to much Business; and the Prosecution of the one, can by no Means palliate the neglect of the other. Therefore the last Subterfuge from this Duty is,

*Object. 3. The Objection from internal Indispositions; alledging Averseness and Unfitness for Prayer: Wherein taken no Delight, finding no Satisfaction, reaping no Profit, some have no Heart thereto, and but little regret to neglect and shift it off.* Indisposition.

*Ans.* Which, as I verily believe, is the most general Hinderance to Prayer, so is it the worst grounded and the weakest Excuse for a Fault, because a Fault it self; wherewith to cover another, is to lay on a Patch more ugly than the Sore. For such an Indisposition ought not to be yielded to in Complaint, but to be speedily corrected and cured by a Reformation; whereof Prayer is the principal Means; whereby we may



attain to better Dispositions ; and wherein alone we may hope to meet with God's Grace to co-operate with our own Endeavours for them ; which is never wanting to serious and honest Intentions ; and whereon our Attendance is the more necessary, the more averse we are ; a total Neglect tending to an Obduracy, that may render what is but Difficult, Impossible: *shutting the Door* of Mercy upon us, and justly denying, what we refused to be at the Pains of Learning to ask for.

So that the Obligation to *Prayer* is such, we may conclude, as no Objection can reasonably excuse from ; whereof having been thus fully instructed, in general, as to its *Act*, its *Object*, its *Subject*, its *Kinds*, its *Qualification and Circumstances*, and finally its *Obligation*, its due *Practice*, in Obedience hereto, will now lie at our Door ; *Praying always, with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit. And watching thereunto with all Perseverance.*

Collect for  
10th Sun-  
day after  
Trinity.

God give us Grace duely so to do, for the Sake and Merits of his dear Son our Saviour ! And,  
Let thy merciful Ears, O Lord, be open to the Prayers of thy humble Servants ; and that they may obtain their Petitions, make them to ask such things as shall please thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

S E R-

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S E R M O N XXXV.

O N T H E

Lord's P R A Y E R.

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Matth. vi. 9.

*After this manner therefore pray ye : —*

**T**H E Nature and Obligation of *Prayer*, concerning which we last discoursed, is not more generally acknowledged, than its Practice, concerning which the Text is instructive, hath been naturally mistaken and abused. For, most Men have ever own'd they ought, but few knew how to pray ; before the Son of God, in Mercy and Compassion to Human Blindness, condescended to teach us herein himself. Whereof the Excellent *Plato* appeareth to have been so remarkably apprehensive, that in one of his *Dialogues* he thought himself obliged to admonish Men to leave off *praying*, till one should come among them, who should teach them to pray with more Wisdom and Advantage : Presuming that the Divine Goodness would in due time provide a Supply sufficient for this Human Want also. And what he then apprehended so absolutely necessary for us, we having long since

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seen

seen fulfilled to us, in this Venerable Prayer, to which our *Catechism* directs, and our *Text* is introductory.

- These words are absolutely perceptive, against the *Heathens* and *Pharisees's* Sin in their Prayers, which our *Saviour* had rebuked and warned against in the Context. When thou Prayest, saith he, thou shalt not be as the *Hypocrites* are, for they love to pray standing in the *Synagogues*, and in the *Corners of Streets*; that they may be seen of Men. Neither when ye pray, use vain Repetitions, as the *Heathens* do. . . . . Be not, saith he, like unto them; but to avoid their Sin, and to perform aright this Duty, after this manner, therefore, pray ye; hereby enjoining not only to pray, which is implied, but to pray after this manner. Indeed, all Religions agree in this, that Men ought to pray; but to pray amiss, hath been the Error not only of *Pagans*, but naturally of all; who, of our selves, know not what to pray for, as we ought. Therefore, he who hath here undertook to teach to pray, hath taught how to pray; even after this manner; i. e.
- [οὕτως.] Thus, either according to this Pattern, or in this very Form of Words following; whereof the Subject and Nature of the things there prayed for, is such, as will warrant our conceiving Christ to have enjoined both. So that the import of this his Precept is here Two-fold; Prescribing this his following Prayer to become a Pattern unto those our own Prayers which we our selves put up to God: And moreover enjoining us the Use hereof in the very words wherein he hath taught it, as a Badge of that Service which we owe to the Authour of it. Accordingly,

The Lord's Prayer a Pattern. I. These words prescribe to us the Lord's Prayer to be a Pattern for those Prayers which we our selves put up

up to God. As Christ prayed in the following words, so ought we to address our selves to God in our Prayers. After this same manner we also are to pray; not excluding other Prayers, but proposing this as an Example for them. To illustrate, therefore this, it will here be requisite to shew the Consistency of other Prayers with this, and wherein the Correspondence between other Prayers, and this ought to consist. For if we are only to pray after this manner; then it seems

1. That other Prayers may be used by us as well as other this. For, the Manner being observed, the Form Prayers may be varied; and what is in this Prayer delivered only in general Petitions, may be enlarged to particulars, as occasion requires; which are implied, though not expressed in the Lord's Prayer; neither are they prohibited to be expressed; nor will the Expression thereof at all detract from its Perfection; since we need not other Prayers to supply any Defect in this; but only to apply what is herein expressed in general, more particularly to our present Necessities, which it was neither needful nor possible for the Lord's Prayer to take notice of. So that the thing required is, that our particular Prayers be all composed by us, after this general Form; included therein or deducible therefrom, which so far are consistent therewith, and may, no doubt, be used as well as this. And accordingly our Saviour himself, and those that were acquainted with his Mind and Practice herein, used Variety of Prayers, according to the several Occasions, differing from this particular Form; and it is made the Duty of Christians to be praying always, with all sorts of Prayer, suited Eph. 6. 18, to different Occasions; only therein taking our Pattern from this one Form of our Lord's. Consider we therefore,

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Other  
Prayers  
must be  
like this,  
for

2. *Wherein the Correspondence between our own and this Form of Prayer ought to consist ; or in what respects we may be said to pray by other Forms, after the Manner of this our Lord hath taught. The which seem to be comprehended in these Two, viz. In respect of the subject Matter of it ; and in respect to the Manner of Address therein. Therefore we seem hereby to be obliged to conform our own Prayers*

Matter.

1. *To the subject Matter or Argument of the Lord's Prayer. Ever praying, though not in the same words only, yet always to the very same purpose ; imitating the Sublimity, the Gravity, the Necessity, and the singular Choiceness of its Matter ; designing all our Requests to the Glory of God that his Name may be hallowed ; his Kingdom come, and his Will be done ; requiring for our selves no more than what is needful, and best for us, and what God will not deny us, even Daily Bread, and Forgiveness of Sins, Things nearly concerning us to ask, and hugely pleasing to God to give, making our Errand suitable to his Majesty, and our Needs, for which this Prayer is exemplary, and recommended to our Imitation. For more profitably Man cannot pray after any other manner, nor can better things be either desired or granted ; among which there is nothing mean or indecent, which becomes not the Argument of Prayer, or is not grateful to God to hear, and vastly advantageous for us to be heard in, whereon we may safely enlarge our Hearts and spend our Affections, and be confident of the warrantableness and acceptableness of our Petitions ; after this manner, in such like Requests, making known our Desires to God by Prayer. But this, moreover, as was said, obligeth us to conform our Prayers*

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2. *To the Manner of address therein*; It being no *Manner*, less exemplary, and deserving our Imitation for its being a *Form* of Composure, its exact *Order and Method*, comprehensive *Brevity*, profitable *Plainness*, comely *Simplicity* of Expression, lowly *Reverence*, and strong *Faith* and Confidence proposed as directive of our Devotion, hereby to us. And as therefore our Pattern we may imitate it as it is,

1. *A Composed Form of Prayer*: Which is the very *Manner*, in which Christ prayed himself, and taught his Disciples; wherein he is pleased to command our Imitation; requiring, if not the Use of these very words of his; yet, at least, the Use of words composed by our selves, *after the like Manner* into a *Form*, as an *Implicit Caution* against too confidently trusting to sudden Conceptions; which, upon the Account of their general Deficiencies, are so apt to render *Prayer*, either burthensome or distasteful; and as an *express Invitation* to premeditate and consider well our Requests before we offer them to God; that they may be more mature, and select, and helpful to Men's Infirmities, and suitable to their Capacities, and a Security of Decency and Order in Worship, and uphold more sensibly a Communion of Saints in the Church. And in which way had not *Christ* taught, he would not therefore have taught a way of *Prayer*, whereof all his followers had been capable: But *after a manner*, wherein few could imitate him, and none without some Difficulty, and after all it can be never so well performed, *extempore*, as in a studied *Form*, by any of even those that are most able and zealous for that way. So that our *Lord's Prayer* not only warrants, but encourages us to pray rather by ap-

approved proper Forms, than by sudden and rash Effusions.

In Method.

2. *The Order and Method in this Prayer*, is also, *exemplary*; commanding our *Imitation* in all our Addresses to God, *after the same manner* to preface our Requests with such Application of his Name, as may dispose us into an holy Awe and Reverence; to intend chiefly God's Glory, and our own and others Temporal Advantage only secondarily, and in subserviency thereto; to accompany all our *Supplications* with *Thanksgiving*, that may ascribe the Glory due to God's Name wholly to him; and to ratifie all our Desires by Faith and Confidence of being heard, wherein it is best and needful for us, concluding with an hearty *Amen*. Beginning and ending, in all our Prayers with God; and making spiritual Blessings the chief Argument of our Errand to him, as the most proper Order of our Requests, taught us here in our Lord's own Prayer, wherein we may hope they will be offered most acceptably to God, and returned with Success to our selves.

Eph. 6.  
18.

In Brevity.

3. *The comprehensive Brevity*, also, of this *Prayer*, requires our Observation in the *Manner* of our own. For, our *Saviour* having, in the words immediately preceeding, caution'd his Disciples against the Prolixity of the *Heathen's* Prayers, and herein delivering them a very comprehensive, and withal a very short compendious Form of one, for their Imitation, doth plainly instruct them, that not the *Length* but the *Pertinency* of Prayer is what God regards, and hath made our Duty. And that therefore when we pray to him, we must *after this Manner*, suit the length of our Prayer to the Strength of our Affection, and Weakness of our Spirits. As to say no more than

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than what we mean, and can attend to, without being tired out till all is ended; so to mean as much as may be, in what we do say, that God may not be dishonoured by our *much speaking*. Mat. 6. 7. Again,

4. *The profitable plainness of this Prayer*, is what *In plainness* both requires and deserves our Imitation. Both its Matter and Expression being not only intelligible to the most Ignorant, but also instructive to the most Learned. Teaching us to address God, as with Matters of greatest Importance, so in Terms suitable to the Capacities of the weakest concerned in them. Presenting our greatest Necessities, worthy of God's regard, and most for our Profit, adorned not so much with strains of Rhetorick, as with the Fervency of Devotion. Neither presuming to call on the *Most High*, to attend our meanest Trifles or Impertinencies, nor to hope to move him by Language or Style; with whom nothing will avail, but our Need and Importunity. And,

5. *The comely Simplicity of Expression*, which is very exemplarily prescribed us in this Prayer, *In proper Expressions* calls for our regard no less. Being as free from the slovenliness of Inconsideration and Carelessness, as from the Spruceness of Affectation and Eloquence. Whereof every Expression is not more plain than proper, favouring no more of Impudence than of Pride. Setting us a Pattern to observe a due *Decorum after this manner* also, in our Addresses to the *Throne of Grace*; whither it is our Duty to come not more *Boldly* than Considerately; with such a Sense of God's Majesty, and our own Vileness, as may Awe us with the serious weightiness of our Errand thither, and restrain us from that indecent Familiarity and Rash-

Heb. 4.  
16.



Rashness, of mingling any Impertinencies, or odd Opinions, or crude and unfavourably Expressions in our Worship; that ought to proceed from a Desire and Design of Honouring God with the very best of our Performance, with Modesty, Decency, and unaffected Care and Study.

*In Reverence.*

6. *The lowly Reverence* remarkable in this Prayer, is also Exemplary for our own Prayers. Whereby God is address'd as enthron'd in Glory and Majesty; even as *Our Father which is in Heaven*; to whom *Kingdom, Power and Glory* are ascribed, to quicken the Sense of the infinite distance between him and his Creatures, and to dispose to an humble Awe; which is the only acceptable Temper wherewith to Approach him, who is *serv'd acceptably with Reverence and a Godly Fear*. After which manner, therefore, ought we in all our Prayers to signify our profoundest Reverence and Humility before God; Offering him the *Sacrifice of a broken Spirit*; to which he hath promised a favourable Look; And without which, there can be no speeding with him, to whom *every one that is proud in Heart is Abomination*; whose Petitions are *Demands*, and more apt to irritate than to prevail.

*In Faith.*

7. Lastly, *The strong Faith and Confidence*, signified in this Prayer is also very remarkable for our Imitation. Teaching us to address God as *Our Father*; believing him to be well affected towards us, and willing to do us good, hoping thence to receive the Good we desire from him. Directing us to profess his *Dominion, Power and Glory*; relying wholly on his Relief, who alone hath Authority of Disposal, and Strength to execute what he Wills, whose the Glory of all our Successes is. And therefore obliging us to ratifie and seal up all

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our Requests to him with an hearty Amen, in confidence and full Assurance that having asked aright, our Prayers will in due time, and in the best manner be accepted from, and answered to us, which is the Disposition appropriated to Prayer; we being required to draw near to God with a true Heart, in full assurance of Faith. And to lift up holy Hands, without doubting. And to ask in Faith nothing wavering. A benign Nature not loving to be suspected; whose Goodness and Faithfulness is prejudic'd by Diffidence; and whose Ears a mistrustful Mind stops to his Prayers.

Heb. 10.

22.

1 Tim. 2.

8.

Jam. 1.6.

Such is the Correspondence, both for Matter and manner of Address, that is required to be between this Prayer of our Lord's, and those we make of our own Imitation thus hereof, being considered only as our Pattern. Which yet being not the whole Design of this Prescription in the Text, we now come also to consider, as was propos'd,

II. *These Words, as they enjoin us the Use of the The Lord's Prayer, in the very Words wherein it is taught, as a Badge of that Service which we owe to the Author of it.* Indeed, whether these words of themselves intend this, is not agreed on among the Learned; who yet generally accord in its being the literal import of the parallel Passage in St. Luke, where it is positively express'd, *When ye Pray, say;* even the following Prayer there; 2. which is the very same with this here, whether delivered at another time, and upon another occasion, or no, as is also a controverted Point. So that comparing the one with the other, it is natural and easie to collect the Design of the Prayer,

Lord's  
Prayer a  
Form.

Luk. 11.

Prayer, to be both a *Pattern* and a *Form*, obliging both our Imitation and Use; always to *Pray after this manner*, and *when we Pray*, to make Use also of these very Words, and *say*, as followeth. Which are Words framed for us, and put into our Mouths by our Saviour; wherewith as his Disciples to address God in his Name, and upon his Merit directed by him. And which surely, however refused or neglected by some, seems to be reasonably grounded upon the following Considerations, recommending its constant Use to all.

*Necessary.* 1. *The Consideration of our own natural Infirmit- ties and Need we stand in to have such a Form of Prayer provided for us, as Supplemental to the necessary Defects of our own Prayers.* For when the best Gifted, or most devout Man hath done his best in uttering his Mind in Prayer; he cannot but see reason at the End thereof, to add one Petition more for Acceptance of weak yet honest Endeavours, and Pardon of numerous Defects. *Inadvertency* causing the Omission of many necessary Petitions. *Ignorance* too oft inserting what had better have been omitted. *Carnality* bribing Affections to spend themselves, too much in Requests for temporal and present Concerns. And *Selfishness* tainting Desires with Partiality for private Interest or particular Opinions; whereby human Composures are very apt to be corrupted. Neither are all Men capable, nor any always disposed to cloath their Desires in Terms, every way proper and suitable to the Majesty of God; or their own Vileness. To supply and atone for which Defects, the Use of the best Form of Prayer we can procure, appears both Necessary and Profitable, thankfully to be accepted of by us. And there-

therefore, while there are such Errors, or a Probability of them in all Prayers of Man's Composure ; it can be no unreasonable Advice to prompt Men to have recourse to to a Prayer, where there can be no Danger at all of begging any thing that is unfit to be asked, or in other Terms, than are fit to be used, and which is far more easie to Use than to imitate. Indeed, if such an help had not been provided, and we were not furnished with such a Form of Prayer, we might well enough hope, that God would pass by all the Involuntary Defects of our own Prayers. But this surely, seems very unreasonable to hope, now we have so ready a Means to supply them, and yet wantonly and presumptuously refuse to Use it. So that, unless we were of more Ability, and could have greater Assurance of our own Performances, it plainly appears our Duty and Interest, *When we pray, to say after our Lord's Manner*, the words he taught. And this too, from the Consideration of

2. *The Excellency and Perfection of this his Form of Prayer.* Being the best Extant for such supply of our Want, and of all other to be preferr'd by us for Use; being it self Perfect, and the Composition of him by whom alone, both we and our Prayers are made acceptable.

As it is made the *Pattern* of all other Prayers, it is supposed to be most Compleat ; forasmuch as the Example is the Guide and Warrant of a Copy ; more worthy and fitter for Use, than any imperfect Imitation of ours can be. And therefore, he who proposed this as a *Pattern* for our Imitation, lest we should not in every Point do as we are taught thereby, hath thought fit also to enjoin it as a *Form of Words* for our Use ; where-

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by we may be sure to make up the Defects of our own Composures. And therefore, though, in way of Imitation, other Prayers may be made by us *After this Manner*, whereby we may give Scope to our Spirit, to enlarge on more particular Exigences; yet only by this *Form* may we give Strength to our Faith and Confidence in our Prayer, and by concluding and summing up our own imperfect Petitions herewith Crown the Performance. For in the Use of only our own Prayers, after all our Care and Devotion, we cannot be sure that we come off Blameless; because we had a better Prayer, and more unblemish'd Offering at hand. The which therefore, while we use, we may confidently rely on, and have only our own Heart to attend to and to be jealous of, having had Means to represent all our Wants, and Opportunity to exercise all our Graces herein.

And as those that presented Petitions to the *Roman Emperours*, were wont (as it is related) to draw them up by the Direction of judicious Lawyers, as contributing to their Perfection; so we have this Sacred *Form* from the *Wonderful Counsellour*, who coming out of the Bosom of the Father, well understood the Mind of God, and our Wants, and the fitness of Expression for Address to him for supply of them. And being to return again to Heaven to be our Advocate there, would be sure to chuse for us Requests most suitable to his Office; which he hath taught us to use in this *Form*, to maintain an Harmony between our Prayers here, and his Intercessions for us in Heaven. To which God will be sure to lend his ready and most favourable Ear; and deny nothing to the Prayer of his beloved Son, bearing his  
Image,

*Image*, Signed with his *Hand*, and offered in his *Name*, and made use of by his *Authority*; whereby we cannot fail of Acceptance, if we present it *Sincerely* and *Reverently*. For our further Encouragement whereto may be added,

3. Lastly, *The Consideration of the universal Practice of the Christian Church*; which from the very beginning may be reasonably supposed not only to have imitated, but to have worshipped by this Prayer. For the *Silence of the New Testament* can be no Objection against the *Apostles*, either *Using* or not *Using* it as a *Form*; because to them the Command for the *Using* of it was immediately given, upon their Desire to have it taught them for that very end, who are not to be supposed simply to have desired our *Saviour* to teach them to *Pray*. For being *Jews* they had their set hours of daily Prayer which they constantly observed, and therefore knew how to *Pray*; but what they desired was, as *St. Luke* very particularly relates the matter, that *Christ* would teach them to *Pray*, as *John* taught his *Disciples*. Not after any singular Example of *John*, but according to the General Practice of the Jewish Doctors, whose Custom it was to teach their *Disciples* some particular *Form of Prayer*, as the Badge and Livery of their *Discipleship*. According to which Custom, *John* provided a *Form of Prayer* peculiarly for his own *Disciples*; which the *Disciples of Jesus* understanding, they also make their Request to be taught a *Form*, according to this laudable Custom, their *Praying* by which might declare whose *Disciples* they also were. Whereupon receiving this *Prayer*, it cannot be otherwise imagined but that they duely made use of it, answerable to their own Intent in desiring it; and to

LU. II. I.  
καὶ αὐτοὶ; &c.

Christ's Injunction in granting it. The *Obligation* whereof being perpetual, the *Use* of it must so remain to the end of the World; and all that will profess themselves the Disciples of *Jesus*, ought to receive and learn his Form of Prayer to Worship by. And though from the *Ascension* of our Lord from Earth to Heaven, it be enjoined, Jo. 16. 23, 24, & 26. that we offer up all our Prayers only *in his Name*, whereof there is no mention in this his *Form*; yet is this no Argument that this was of no longer *Use*, than while Christ did ascend (as some have objected) since it is evident, that a Prayer may be offered *in his Name*, though he be not named therein. And we have several Prayers of Saints recorded in the New Testament, wherein there is no mention made of his Name, which yet doubtless were all offered up to God according to this Command. For to *Pray in the Name of Christ*, is to Pray through his Mediation, and to hope and depend upon his Sacrifice, wholly relying upon his Merit and Intercession for the Acceptance and Success of our Prayers; and this as it may be done without expresse mentioning his *Name* therein, so will no Prayer be accounted to be offered in his Name, tho' never so much mention be made of him, being void hereof. So that *Christ's* not inserting his Name in this his Prayer, is no hinderance to its being offered in his *Name*; neither was it proper for his *Name* to have been inserted when it was *first* Composed and Delivered. Because then, *before his Ascension*, no Prayer was to *Ask any thing in his Name*; and after it nothing hindred but this as well as any other might be used *in his Name*. It seeming purposely to have being so framed, that it cannot, (now the Doctrine of his Mediation hath been more

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more fully explained) be used otherwise. For now it is we call him *Our Father*, only through the Relation and Interest we have in him by our Adoption through *Christ*; in whose *Name* therefore, as well as words we invoke him, whenever we offer up this Form of Prayer. Upon which account the Use of it hath generally been acknowledged to be perpetual in his Church, and hath in all Ages been received and appointed in its Liturgies; never either omitted or question'd (as Learned Men have proved) for Fifteen hundred years, and which therefore we still retain and continue, as a standing Form and Body of our Profession. For which we are infinitely obliged to bless God, and ought to be frequent and constant in the most devout Use of it, and to be well vers'd, not only in its Words but Sence; that our Understanding and Hearts may keep pace with our Memory and Tongues; without which it will be impossible for us to pray acceptably, by either this or any other, either *Pattern*, or *Form of Prayer*. And therefore, for this End, (these things having been thus premised concerning the *Lord's Prayer* in general,) it will be requisite to consider it more particularly; endeavouring the Explanation of the Import, and Use of all its several Parts; which is the designed Subject, God willing, of some of the following Discourses.

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the *Collected* Prayers of thy People which call upon thee; and *the first* grant that they may both perceive and know what *Sunday* things they ought to do, and also may have Grace *after the* and Power faithfully to fulfil the same, through *Epiphany* *ny.* *Jesus Christ our Lord.* Amen.

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S E R M O N XXXVI.

O N T H E

Preface to the Lord's Prayer.

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Matt. vi. 9.

*Our Father which art in Heaven.*

*The Parts  
of the  
Lord's  
Prayer.*

*The Pre-  
face which  
is Invoca-  
tion.*

**A**FTER the Injunction of the *Lord's Prayer* followeth the Prayer it self, wherein four Parts are ordinarily distinguished, *viz.* The *Preface*, The *Petitions*, The *Doxology*, and The *Conclusion*.

The *Preface* consists of the Words in the Text, expressing the first Part of Prayer, which is *Invocation*; whereby we salute and bespeak the Person we Address with his most proper Titles, to signify our *Esteem* of him, to acknowledge our *Dependence* on him, and to profess our *Faith* in him. Concerning which, therefore we shall have occasion to consider the four following Enquiries, *viz.*

I. *Why it is that we are taught to invoke him we Pray to by any Title at all.*

II. *Who it is that is here intended by this Title of Our Father which is in Heaven?*

III. *What*

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III. *What is the Import or meaning of these several Appellations whereof the Title is made up? And,*

IV. *Why are we taught the Use of them in Prayer?*

I. The first Inquiry is, *Why it is that we are taught to invoke him we Pray to, by any Title at all? Its Intent.*

For God only being the undoubted proper Object of Religious Prayer, is not to be supposed to be of so scanty a Knowledge, as not to know when we speak to him, nor of so drowsie an Attention, as to need to be thus awakened by us. In our Addresses, indeed, to Men, to call upon them by their Name or Title, is sometimes necessary, and always reasonable, to let them know it is to them we speak, and to engage them to attend favourably to what we are about to say: But in God can be found neither such Reason or Necessity. And therefore we must resolve, that it is not from any Consideration of *Him* to whom we Pray, that mention is made of his Name and Titles, but wholly for our *own Sakes*; who thro' our natural Dulness and Forgetfulness, stand in need to be put in mind of the Presence, and Majesty we are about to make our Approaches to; as a fit Preparative for Prayer, in order to conform our Deportment suitable to the Name or Title we address God by. And, therefore, it is that we are taught, first to call upon him by his *Name* and *Attributes*, before we make known to him our *Requests*, that we may affect our hard Hearts with a Sence and Disposition to suit our Petitions and Behaviour in regular Approaches thereto. An ordinary or heedless Temper is no fit Disposition for Prayer. And therefore to excite Devotion to a meet Pitch, it hath ever been the Method of addressing God in the most solemn Manner, to introduce Prayer with some Preface,

Commemorating such of his Titles or Attributes

as may *Warrant the Petitions* we are about to present, and *Dispose our Affections* to present them acceptably to God. In which manner, *Solomon, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, our Saviour and his Apostles*, Composed their solemn Forms of Prayer, left upon record for our Instruction. Our next Inquiry is,

II. *Who it is that is here intended by this particular Title, taught by our Saviour, of Our Father which is in Heaven?* The which being in the Jewish Language an usual *Periphrasis* of God, and having here a Relation to what *Christ* had immediately before taught concerning our *Father's seeing in Secret, and rewarding openly*, can only be meant of him; who alone is the proper Object of Prayer, and besides whom we have neither Authority nor Pattern to address as in *Heaven, short of whom* none of our Devotion is to stop, and *in whom* we are to adore the whole Divine Essence. And therefore, as under this Title, we are to Worship *none but God*; so neither are we to Worship *any* but whom we may address, after the manner of this Prayer, to which all our's must conform, under such Title. So when we Pray, it is not any *Angel* or *Saint* we are taught to Invoke though in Heaven, but only *Our Father which is in Heaven*, who is the only God, and Object of Prayer we have there. And though in the Godhead we are assured, that there are *Three distinct Persons*, even the *Father*, and the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*; yet are we here taught to mention only the Name of the *First*, in regard of that Pre-eminence due unto the *Father*, as he is the Fountain and Root of the Deity; in Con-

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junction with whom, according to the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, we also hereby invoke the other two. For those Places of Scripture which teach us that Doctrine, do also prompt us to pay the same Acknowledgments to the *Son* and *Holy Ghost* as to the *Father*; by which Name the *Son* is expressly mentioned by the Prophet *Isaiah*, with the Epithet of *Everlasting*, and by this distinguishing Property, the *Holy Ghost* is also intimated by the Evangelist *St. John*, teaching that *except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*. Into whose Names we are therefore, equally and conjunctly Baptized; to whom paternal Actions of *Creation*, *Regeneration* and *Adoption* are common; the whole Divine Essence being *our Father which is in Heaven*, and which therefore we equally Address, invoking God, by this Title. Consider we therefore now,

Jo. 10. 30.  
1 Jo. 5. 7.  
Jo. 5. 23.  
Isa. 9. 6.  
Jo. 3. 5.

III. *What is the import and meaning of these several Appellations whereof this Title is made up.* For thus we are here taught, not only to address God by the Name of *Father*, but as *Our Father*, yea as *Our Father which is in Heaven*; having regard to his distinguishing Property, his Relation to us, and his Residence. By calling him *Father*, we profess to Worship the *Trinity in Unity*. By acknowledging him to be *Our Father*, we are admonish'd of the Interest we have in him. And by mentioning his Being *in Heaven*, we are caution'd of the Distance we stand in to him, and the Reverence wherewith we ought to approach him.

As we name God *Father*, we are directed to Worship in our Prayers, the *Trinity in Unity*: To whom Divine Honour equally belongs, and ought to

The Father.



to be paid. *Father* being the distinguishing Name of the *First Person* in the God-head, by which Title being directed to Invoke him, it is intended that we thereby own therein the Distinction; and address God as *Christians*, whose *Pattern* and *Form* this Prayer of our Lord's peculiarly is; whereby we call upon God as the *Father* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the Doctrine whereof we profess to believe in our *Creed*, and which therefore hath already been explained by us.

Our Father.

2. As we name God *Our Father*, we are intended to be already admonish'd of the *Interest* we *have* in him, and in one another, for the Encouragement of our Address to so tremendous a Majesty; to whom only so tender, and near a Relation to our selves, could embolden and invite to make our Approaches. And therefore, is the Belief of this also made a necessary *Article* of the Christian Faith. In our Explanation whereof have been already shewn the manifold and certain Grounds whereon it is established and confirmed to us.

In Heaven.

3. As we declare God to be *our Father* which is in *Heaven*, we do not hereby deny his Presence, or such his Relation to us on Earth also; but we magnifie his Greatness, by Addressing him in his most Glorious Place of Residence, where he hath more especially established his *Throne of Grace*, and sits upon it in the greatest State, in a Posture to here and receive Prayers, through the Intercession of his Son, which is there only made for us at the Right-Hand of God, who is alone our *Heavenly Father*; and to whom therefore it is meet that when we direct our Speech, we should call him *Our Father* which is in *Heaven*. It remains then that we also Consider now,

Read

IV. Lastly,

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IV. Lastly, *Why we are taught the Use of these* The Suit-  
ableness  
hereof to  
Prayer. *Titles in Prayer*; and may not address God under some other Form as well as this. The reason whereof will appear in the very Titles themselves, which best suit the Duty, and suggest such Dispositions as are requisite for Devotion. Many necessary Admonitions are inferrable, for the advantage of Prayer, from the Consideration that God is the *Father*; especially he being also *Our Father*. And particularly our Addressing him as *in Heaven*.

1. By the Title of *Father*, we are intended to ascribe *Honour* due unto himself, and to assume The Title  
of Father  
yielding, *Encouragement* necessary to such our Addressees.

1. The Title of *Father* ascribes *Honour to God*; Honour to  
God. implying *Dignity*, and exciting *Reverence, Obedience, Submission, Dependance, Love, Faith and Hope*; which are the most suitable Dispositions to the Nature of the present Duty, and are indispensibly required from us in all our Approaches to him thereby.

The Design of *Prayer* is to do God *Worship and Honour*; and that we may not be forgetful hereof, how can we begin our Addresses to him therein more fitly, than by styling him *Father*? Which is a Relation both *obliging to, and encouraging Respect and Veneration*. *Honour thy Father and Mother*, is the *First Commandment with Promise*. And a *Son* honoureth his *Father*, saith the Prophet Eph. 6. 2.  
Mal. 1. 6. *Malachi*, and a *Servant* his *Master*; *If I then be a Father, where is any Honour?* saith the Lord of *Hosts*.

*Prayer*, without *Obedience*, is both unacceptable to God, and unprofitable to our selves; And what can be a greater Tye upon us thereto, than  
our

our obligation to address God as our *Father*; on which Relation, *Obedience* is founded both by Reason and Religion; and whom we shall not be so apt to treat as an Enemy, remembring that he is to be address'd by us no otherwise than as a *Father*. *Submission* of our Desires to the Will of God, is another due Qualification of Prayer; to which our Entitling God *Father* therein obligeth; as being an acknowledgment that the Right of Disposal belongeth only to him. The *Father's Will* being the *Children's Law*; whereby tho' it is oft the *Unhappiness* of many greatly to suffer, through the Blindness and Perverseness of some Parents to Govern; Yet it is the *Duty* of all Children, till they arrive at Capacity and Liberty to dispose of themselves, to give up themselves intirely to the Conduct of them, to whom they are entrusted. Much more is *Submission to our Heavenly Father* both his *Right* and our *Interest*. To whom we therefore approach not to *Instruct* and *Direct*, but to *intreat* and *submit* to his good Pleasure; who is a *Father of Wisdom*, knowing what is fittest for us; and a *Father of Mercies*, that is oft more kind to us in *Denying* what we ask, than he could have been in *Granting* our Petitions. And therefore to such an One, *making known our Requests*, we ought to trust him for the Grant of them, and rest contented with the Issue as best for us, according to the Will of our best *Father*.

Prayer also, as it is a signification of our *Dependence* upon God, most fitly addresses him by the Title, and under the notion of *Father*; from whom we received our Being, and by whom we are, and must be maintained; and to the Supplies and Blessings of whose Providence we intirely trust and owe our Sustentation.

Love

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*Love* is the wing of Devotion, without which no Prayer can reach Heaven; and which therefore is fitly kindled by so endearing a Title, that both *requires* and *deserves* it.

Prayer, again, without the full assurance of Faith and Hope, is a tacit reproach of ill Nature; and therefore to do the best of Beings Right, the Appellation of *Father* was both proper and needful to instruct and excite a due Sense of the Divine Benignity, to which our Addresses are made. Heb. 10. 22.

So that for our more regularly approaching God, that we might present our selves before him neither with the *fear of Slaves*, nor with the *suspicion of Strangers*, but with Dispositions most suitable to the Prayers of his own *Children*; even with lowly *Reverence*, and due *Obedience*, with cheerful *Submission*, and an intire *Dependence*, with filial *Love*, with lively *Faith* and strong *Hope*, and in *Honour* to his great Name are we fitly taught to call him *Father*. And more especially, seeing,

2. This Title also derives *Encouragement*, very necessary at such a time, to our selves: It implying not only *Dignity*, but *Grace and Goodness*, upon the account only whereof we dare to *Approach* the Divine Presence, and presume to hope for a favourable *Reception*. Encouragement to our selves.

For our being taught to invoke God by the Name of *Father*, is for our *Encouragement*, and an *To approach Argument to pray to him*: Whom contemplating *proach God* under any of his other Appellations, which represent the Infiniteness of his *Majesty*, more than the Condescension of his *Goodness* to us, we should be more apt to *fear*, and fly from him, or else ever approach him with an uneasy Concern and *Consternation*, as despairing to find Acceptance either for our *Persons* or our *Prayers*. The Name of



of God, importing the Divine Perfections ; The Name of *Lord*, implying Power and Dominion ; with the like Titles declarative of supereminent Majesty, are proper only to make us know and keep our distance, through the Sense of our own Meanness. And therefore the Son of God who knew his Father's Will, and the Thoughts he beareth towards us, presents him first to us as *our Father*, before he mentions his being in *Heaven*; as encouraging our *Approaches*, notwithstanding his Majesty Awes us to a *Distance*. It is natural for Children to seek to their Parents for Protection ; whose *Compassion* is wont to exceed their *Dignity* ; which will not suffer them to reject or refuse their own Off-spring how mean or unworthy soever. *Can a Woman*, [whose Affections are most tender and importunate] argues the Prophet, *forget her sucking Child*, [even a piece of her self, to whom she is engaged by a peculiar obligation of Love and Care,] *that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb ?* Which Nature still seems more to endear to her ? ] *Yea, they may* [tho' it be neither *Human* nor *Usual* to] *forget ; yet will I not forget you ;* [there being no Kindness more certainly and constantly Paternal, than what is Divine, which exceeds even that of the most tender Parent. ] The Consideration whereof *presaging Prayer*, fitly tempers *Majesty*, and reconciles to the Dread it effects. Raising in us Admiration of the infinite *Condescension* of God, and of our own unspeakable *Privilege*, through the *Love* of the *Father* in such a wonderful manner bestowed upon us, whereby we are called the *Sons* of God. And possessing us with thankful Hearts to our Redeemer, who, by the price of his own Blood, purchased this relation and freedom of Access

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cess for us; in whom we have Boldness and Access with Confidence; and who is pleased in the virtue Eph. 3. of his own Mediation, to stand between the Glory and Brightness of the Father, and us poor Creatures, who have reason enough to be otherwise fearful, and backward, and ashamed to draw near to him. And doth here shew us more of his Goodness than of his Greatness; being ready to receive our Desires, and to bring both them and us into the presence of his Father, and our Father. By which Title, as we are thus encouraged to make our Approaches to God, so we also may thereby presume to hope for a favourable Acceptance with him. To hope for Acceptance with him.

which the greatness and multiplicity of our Needs to God might otherwise discourage or ashamed us always to expect. For, the Kindnesses we implore, and the Wants we desire supply for from him, are neither light nor few; neither is it but seldom that we are necessitated to trouble him therewith; which, as his Majesty would not bear; so neither have we Confidence to persist in, but only upon the account of his Paternity, encouraging our Importunity, as it implies the Promise of extraordinary Kindness. And therefore our Lord here instructing our Approaches into the Divine Presence with the most large Petitions in our Mouths, for encouragement, doth not propound to us his Omniscience, tho' without that he could not hear us; Neither his Omnipotence, without which, he cannot help us; But, teaching us to call him Father, he gives us hereby a pledge and Pawn, as it were, before hand of Kindness and Compassion to receive and grant our reasonable and necessary Requests, and authorizes us to expect as much or more from our Heavenly Father, as we can claim, or ever do find from our Earthly Parents; who tho'

tho' *Evil*, and oft Humourfome, yet *knowing how to give good Things to their Children*, and not commonly enduring to suffer their Children to be defeated in their important Desires; necessarily inferrs God to be much more inclinable, (who is *Love* it self, and from whom all other Fathers have derived their Paternal Affections) *to give good Things to them that ask him*; never suffering his Children to return ashamed or deserted, when they beg of him those Things which are most agreeable to his Will, and their Wants. Therefore also saith our Mat. 7. 11. *Saviour, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, in my Name, he will give it you.* Having Christ's Commission to *Ask*, we are assured of his Interest to succeed us, with God who will deny us nothing for his Sake, that is for our Good. Having no where such a *Father*; on whom we may depend for a Fatherly Reception, upon whatever Need we at any time Address him. Having *Patience* to bear with our Weaknesses, *Compassion* to pity our Sufferings, *Kindness* to supply our Wants, *Justice* to avenge our Wrongs, *Power* to defend us from Dangers, *Vigilancy* and *Care* to deliver us from Temptations, *Mercy* to pardon Backslidings, Skill to interpret our Sincerity, *Tenderness* to accept our impotent Service, and *Bounty* abundantly to reward our hearty Performances. And how then can we despond or Doubt, having such a *Father* to deal with? Owning and invoking whom by this Relation, we cannot chuse but with hearty good Will, and confident Hope, upon all Exigences be encouraged to come to him.

Thus, then, in *Honour to God*; that we may express the *Reverence*, *Obedience*, *Submission*, *Dependence*, *Love* and *Faith* we owe, and *Prayer* intends him; and to *Encourage our Selves*, to Ap-  
proach



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proach his Presence, and to Hope for Acceptance, hath our Lord fitly taught us to call him *Father* when we Pray.

2. By the Title of *Our Father*, we intend <sup>The Title</sup> further in our Devotions to acknowledge the *Uni-* <sup>of our Fa-</sup> <sup>ther im-</sup> <sup>porting,</sup> *versality of God's Paternity*, to interest one another, as Brethren, in our Prayers to him, and to Acquiesce in the high *privilege of being Children* of the most High. And therefore tho' this *Plurality of Stile* may seem to suit only a *Form of Publick Prayer*, (whereas it is evident from the Context, that our Saviour prescribeth this Form as a Pattern, and an Exercise also of *Secret Prayer*, even alone in the *Closet*, where it might have been more proper to have been taught to say, *my Father*;) Yet since God is the *Common Father of us all*, and we Brethren to one another, and herein are all highly *Privileged*, it nevertheless suits and improves our Devotions, in whatever Place or Manner performed, to say, as here we are rightly taught, *Our Father*.

1. Acknowledging hereby the *Universality of* <sup>The Uni-</sup> <sup>versality</sup> *the Divine Paternity*; whom we Address not only <sup>of God's</sup> <sup>Paternity.</sup> as the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, but of <sup>Mal. 2.</sup> <sup>10.</sup> *all Mankind, created by one God*; and especially of <sup>Jo. 1. 13.</sup> *the Faithful, who are born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God*. And therefore we are not, in Conceit, proudly and vainly to limit or engross the regard of God unto our selves, as God's *peculiar People*, and his only Children, on whom he partially looks, and alienateth all besides; but to remember his Power and Goodness to be unlimited, and his Fatherly Affection to extend to all sharing with us therein, to whom he is a *Common Parent*, and therein above all *Human Pretensions*, and truly *God*.

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*The Interest all have in each others Prayers.*

2. Besides, that hereby also we are seasonably taught to *Interest one another as Brethren in our Prayers to him.* All being *Children* of the very same *Father*; who is neither *Mine* nor *Thine* singly, but the *Father* of all in general, and is loving unto every *Man*, and will have us, that we may be like him, to be so too. And therefore by adding *Our*, hath obliged us to an universal Charity in our Prayers to the *Father*. Willing that in all our Devotions we should be mindful of those common Bands knitting us together as *Men* and *Christians*; even the Band of *Nature* and *Humanity*, the more strict Tye of common *Faith* and *Hope*, and the closest Union of manifold *Relations* unto *God* that made us, our *Saviour* that redeemed us, and the *Holy Ghost* who animateth and quickneth us together. That with loving Minds and united Hearts, we should maintain the *Communion of Saints* in addressing him, without Partiality and Selfishness, as Members of the same Mystical Body, having a feeling of each others Wants, and desiring the Preservation of the whole, rather than our own private Satisfaction. Making a *Common-Prayer* to the *Common Father* of all Mankind; with whom no outward Respects make any Disparity; who is the Centre of Human Desire, in whom all Hearts should meet, and to whom no Prayer must ever be so private as to be selfish; since tho' we are alone, and Praying in our Closets, and never so particularly for our selves, yet will our Saviour have us to be so mindful also of the State and Condition of our Brethren, as to say, *Our Father*.

*The Privilege of Prayer.*

3. Especially, seeing hereby also, we are effectually admonish'd and encouraged to *acquiesce in this high Privilege of being the Children of the most High.*

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*High.* Whereby we have a stock of Prayers going up continually to Heaven for us, from all our Fellow-Saints throughout the whole World, even in all Ages. Whose *Prayers* concern the whole Body of Christ's Church, whereof we are Members, and thereby Entitled to the Benefit and Comfort of every good Wish made for its welfare, and whereon we may depend, equally, with the Best and Greatest. So that God being *after this manner* Address'd ; *Prayer* seemeth to be intended our greatest Consolation and Confidence; for shelter and support in every Human Exigence. Alone warranting us to be *without Carefulness*, while continually *prayed* for to our Common *Father*. We expecting and accepting whatever happens as the best Return thereto, from him who is inclinable and intreated by all to be Good to us. Leaving us *nothing else to be careful for*, while in every thing by *Prayer and Supplication*, with *Thanksgiving*, our *Requests* are thus made known unto God. 1 Cor. 7.  
32.  
1 Hil. 4. 6.

Upon such instructive and weighty Accounts, of God's universal *Paternity*, our own common *Charity*, and peculiar *Comfort* in every Circumstance of Condition in this world, are we graciously allowed and taught to call God *Our Father*.

3. By ascribing whose Residence to be in *Heaven*, where he is the only *Father* we have, and is more especially Present, in the greatest Manifestation of Majesty and Glory to receive *Prayer*, and is interceded with in our behalf by his only Son our Mediatour, *Sate at his Right-Hand* there to be most effectually reach'd and touch'd by our Requests made in his Name, and through his Interposition for us : whither when we Pray, we are taught to look up, and especially to direct

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our

*God's being in Heaven is Instructive that*

our Devotions for the greater advantage of them.  
For,

Prayer is  
efficacious  
in any  
Place or  
Time.

1. *This aptly minds us, that there is no Circumstance of Time or Place, that can hinder the Use and Efficacy of Prayer.* Because directed to God in Heaven, which is over us, and open to us, wheresoever we are. Where he is always, and equally nigh at hand to hear us. Whose Presence is not confined. Requiring from us no long *Pilgrimages* to come within his hearing; nor curious Choice to get the advantage of Place, to address him with Acceptance; he being neither a *God of the Hills or Valleys*, we are taught to Pray to, but *Our Father which is in Heaven.* And,

Must be  
Spiritual.

2. *This also engageth our Mind and Spirit in this Service;* which is necessitated to be *Spiritual*, since only we can in Spirit possibly ascend to *Heaven*, while here on Earth. Whither, in our Prayers, our *Hearts*, therefore, as well as our *Hands* must be lifted up; and calling off the Soul from the pursuit of all earthly Concerns, whether of *Vanity or Business*, we must wing it into *Heaven*, with every good Wish and holy Vow we make, where only we are taught they can be acceptably delivered to *Our Father.*

Motives  
to Prayer.

Pure.

3. This, further, may seasonably serve to *Admonish us of the Purity of our Prayers.* Which, though the means of Purity, yet being presented by such as neither intend nor endeavour it, can never enter *Heaven*, the Place of Purity and Holiness; where none but the *pure in Heart* can see God, and where only he will be Addressed by us. If, therefore, saith the *Psalmist*, *I regard Iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not hear me; the Holiness of his Habitation* will not admit the Addressees of wicked Persons. Who being in *Heaven*, is not to be

Matt. 5.  
8.  
Pl. 66. 18.

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be approach'd there, but by pure and holy Prayers, presented and delivered by honest and undefiled Hearts. And, therefore, saith the same great Pattern of Devotion, *I will wash mine hands in Innocency ; so will I compass thine Alter, O Lord.* And, the *Apostle* exhorts that Men Pray, every where, *lifting up holy hands ;* which the Holiness of the *Residence*, as well as the Holiness of the *Exercise*, calls for from us, drawing nigh to *Our Father which is in Heaven.* --26, 6.  
1 Tim. 2.

4. This again necessarily excites our profoundest Reverence in Prayer : Being directed to God where he is supposed to reside in most conspicuous Majesty, Dominion and Glory at the greatest distance above us, and whence he dispenceth Judgments as well as Mercies. Whom, therefore, whilst we are admitted to Address, as *Our Father*, we are also hence admonish'd to remember that he is *Our heavenly Father* ; unto whom tho' we may dare to speak, because of his kindness ; yet ought it to be in Fear and Trembling, because of his *Magnificency* ; our Devotion being to be govern'd by an equal Temperament of Love and Fear ; that it may be as void of *Sauciness* as of *Despair* ; and suitable to the *Residence*, as well as *Relation of Our Father which is in Heaven.* Reverence

5. This, moreover, may be improved to *kindle the Ardency of our Prayer* ; which the distance of *Heaven* from us may seem to require, seeing no Prayer goes further than it is carried by the strength of Affection ; which reacheth beyond Sound, and must be upon the stretch to reach to *Our Father which is in Heaven.* An Heartless and Cold Prayer, though uttered by never so strong a Voice, yet dies upon the Lip, never reaching the Ears of God ; who is Deaf to such Cries, and Fervent.



at a distance to be reached only by the *Fervent*  
 Jam. 5. 16. *Prayer of a Righteous Man*, proceeding from holy  
 Zeal and warm Affection, which like a strong Bow,  
 is able to shoot a Petition even through Heaven it  
 self, *and availeth much*. And therefore, herewith  
 ought all our Devotions to be wing'd, having so  
 far to go for us.

6. In a Word, This Consideration may be de-  
 signed too, to *animate our Faith in God's Power,*  
*In Faith.* *and Hope in his Mercy for Success by Prayer.* Hea-  
 ven being the Throne of Omnipotency and Do-  
 minion, where he to whom we Pray hath all  
 things under him, to Command and Dispose of  
 according to his Pleasure. *Our God, Sings the*  
 Ps. 115. *Psalmist, is in Heaven; he hath done whatsoever he*  
 3. *pleased.* And, *Heaven also is the Centre of Good-*  
*Will, and Region of Love; whence every good*  
*and perfect Gift doth come.* And though, we eve-  
 ry day stand in Need of both infinite *Power* to sup-  
 ply our Wants, and *Bowels* to Pardon and accept  
 us; yet with strong Faith and lively Hope, are  
 we hence enabled to *come to the Throne of Grace,*  
 Heb. 4. *being thus taught to address God where his*  
 16. *Power and Mercy chiefly reside, invoking*  
*him as Our Father which is in Heaven.*

Such is the *Meaning*, and such the *Use* of these  
 Titles, whereby our Lord hath taught us to call  
 upon God in *Prayer.* The which, duely *Learn'd*  
 and *Practis'd* by us, will not easily suffer us to  
*Address him amiss,* or to *Provoke him to deny us*  
 any just Requests. And what Requests are such,  
 our *Saviour* hath abundantly Exemplified in the  
 following *Petitions* of this his *Prayer*, which now  
 come to be the Argument of our succeeding Dis-  
 courses, having been so properly Introduced by  
 this

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this its significant Preface of *Our Father which art in Heaven.* In the mean time, the Premises being made our Rule and Pattern, we may, to this Purpose, be understood to bespeak God to whom we are about to Pray.

“ O Thou *High and Lofty One that inhabitest*  
“ *Eternity!* On Thee we call by thy Sa-  
“ cred *Name and Attributes*; not to *Inform*  
“ thee of our Address (from whom nothing  
“ can be hid ) nor to excite thy Attention  
“ to our Requests, ( who art a *God hearing*  
“ *Prayers*, and art always *more ready to Give*  
“ *than we to Ask* ) but to *affect our own stupid*  
“ *Hearts* with a due Sense of thy *Presence*  
“ and *Majesty*, before whom we are now  
“ making our Approaches. Thou art the  
“ only *Object* of all our Adorations, we ha-  
“ ving *none in Heaven but thee, and none in*  
“ *all the Earth that we desire besides thee!*  
“ Thou art the *Father* of our Lord Jesus  
“ Christ, through whose alone Mediation  
“ it is, that we, Sinners, presume to have  
“ Access to the Throne of Grace, worship-  
“ ping the *Trinity in Unity*; and for whose  
“ Sake thou art pleased to Dignifie and  
“ bless us with the Relation and Affection  
“ of *Our Father* also, and thereby to unite  
“ us to thy self and to one another, in the  
“ strictest Bonds of Love and Charity!  
“ *Heaven is thy Throne*, whither we lift up  
“ our Voice, and Hands, and Hearts, from  
“ our low Estate on Earth, where we lie  
“ Prostrate at *thy Footstool*; and in Con-  
“ fidence



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# S E R M O N XXXVII.

## O N T H E

### First Petition of the Lord's Prayer.

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Matt. vi. 9.

— *Hallowed be thy Name.* —

**A**FTER the *Preface* follow the *Petitions* of the *Lord's Prayer*. Of which some reckon *Seven*, tho' most but *Six*; which yet all agree to be reduced to *Two* general Kinds, even such as respect *God* or *our selves*. The *Three* first *Petitions* are such as respect *God*; whereby we are taught to desire, 1. The *Advancement of his Glory*; by saying, *Hallowed be thy Name*. 2. The *Means* of effecting it; *Thy Kingdom come*. 3. The *Manifestation* thereof; *Thy will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven*.

The *First* of these is our *Text*, the present Argument of Discourse; and imports, as is said, a Desire of the *Advancement of God's Glory*, or an *Hallowing* of the *Name* of him, to whom we were before in the *Preface* directed to Address our selves.

For the Explanation of this *Petition*, I shall insist upon the *Four* following Particulars. Considering,

I. What



I. What is meant by the *Name of God*.

II. How this may be *Hallowed*.

III. What it is we are to understand that we Pray for, when we say *Hallowed be thy Name*. And,

IV. The fitness and necessity of this being, as here our *Saviour* hath placed it, the *First and Chief Petition* of our Prayers. Which things severally explained will give sufficient Illustration to the full import of this Petition.

What is  
the Name  
of God.

I. *The Name of God*, then, which we are here taught to Pray that it may be *Hallowed*, according to the Scripture Use thereof, is observed to import these three things of him, viz. His *Essence*, His *Attributes*, and *whatever is made Sacred*, by having had his Name called thereupon, being consecrated to him; whereby he is some way intended to be made known unto, or called to mind by us: *A Name* being that which conveyeth any notice of another to us. And therefore by the *Name of God* is sometimes meant,

1. *His Essence*; even the very Being called by that Name: *Name* and *Essence*, by a common *Hebraism*, being taken promiscuously the one for the other. In which Sense it is understood in those Scripture Expressions, speaking of *Believing on his Name*, *Calling upon it*, and saying *his Name shall be called Wonderful*; meaning by *Name*, God himself. The which also is used for the Person of Man, denoted thereby, as when it is said, *The number of the Names*, meaning the number of those Disciples in the midst of whom St. Peter is said to have stood up together, were about one hundred and twenty. And that there were a few Names,

Jo. 1. 12.

Zec. 13. 9.

Isa. 9. 6.

Act. 1. 15.

i. e.

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i. e. Persons, in *Sardis* which have not defiled their Garments, &c. And therefore to *Hallow* God's Name, is in this Sence to *Hallow* himself. And yet nothing hinders but that, in an inferiour Sence, may hereby be understood,

2. *His very Name*, or Names by which he is described ; whether his *Titles*, whereby he is frequently in Scripture called *Jehovah*, *God*, *Lord*, *Creator*, *King*, *Father*, *Redeemer*, &c. Or his *Attributes*, both *Incommunicable* and *Communicable* ; being revealed and distinguished by those to be *Eternal*, *Infinite*, *Immense*, *Simple*, *Immutable*, *Omnipotent*, *Omniscient*, *Independent*, and the like ; and by these to be *Holy*, *Just*, *Merciful*, *True*, *Powerful*, *Good*, *Wise*, &c. By all which God leads to the Knowledge of himself, more obscurely in his *Works* of Creation and Providence, but more clearly and evidently in his *Word*. Whereupon these also, for the Relation they have to God, are his *Name* that we must *Hallow*. And, finally, in Analogy hereto, are to be understood by his *Name*,

3. *All other things* upon which the *Name* of God is called, having any Relation to him, or whereof he is Owner and Lord by some peculiar Right, through his own Sanctification, or Men's Consecration ; whether of *Persons*, or *Things*, or *Times*, or *Places* ; whereby, as by a *Name*, he will be own'd and acknowledged by us.

II. *To Hallow such Name of God* ; is, according to the Etymology of the word, to *make Holy* ; and which is reckoned may be done these three manner of ways.

*How Hal-  
lowed.*

i. *By Infusion*, Which is the implanting the real Principles and Habits of Holiness into that  
which

which is *Hallowed*. But of this God's *Name* cannot be capable; to whose infinite Perfections nothing can be added; neither is he to be made Holy by any of his Creatures, whom in this Sense he maketh Holy; sanctifying his Elect People by infusing his Grace into them, and *Hallowing* them in some Measure and Similitude to himself. Accordingly our Saviour prays, *Sanctifie through thy Truth, thy word is Truth*; and St. Paul, *The very God of Peace sanctifie you wholly*. But then there is also an *Hallowing*,

Jo. 17. 17.  
1 Thes. 5.  
23.

2. By *Dedication*, Which is a Separation or Setting apart from vulgar and common Use, and using in a separate manner, that which is *Hallowed*, with that Reverence and Respect not allowable or proper to any thing else. In which Notion *Holy* is opposed to *Common* or *Prophane*, according to the Signification of the Hebrew and Syriack word, in which Language our Saviour is supposed to have uttered this Petition. And thus God's *Name is Hallowed*, when his *Being* is revered, and himself treated with a Reverence peculiar to him above all other things. When his *Titles* are mention'd with the profoundest awe and seriousness; and his *Attributes* adored, and ascribed to him in all his *Works*, with Admiration and Praise; and in his *Word* with Faith and Humility. When *Publick Places* of Worship are consecrated to his Service; fit *Persons* devoted to Officiate therein; a competent *Maintenance* settled thereon; due Portions of our *Time* appropriated thereto; and every of these treated according to their Design; and none of the Bounds to fence each are broken down, but all preserved from the inroad of Sacrilegious Prophaners. But then also there is a further *Hallowing*,

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3. *By Declaration.* Which is an Acknowledgment of the Holiness of that which is indeed so, by a suitable Deportment. In which Sense those are implied to *Sanctifie* or *Hallow* the Name of God, who fear him, and upon whom is his dread; which *Isa. 29.* is that, *Moses said unto Aaron, that the Lord spake, 23.* saying, *I will be Sanctified in them that come nigh me, ---8. 13.* and before all the People I will be glorified; implying *Lev. 10. 3.* that then God's Name is Hallowed, when it is had in Reverence, and open Veneration; and both himself fear'd, and all things relating to him greatly esteemed and extoll'd.

III. When we say *Hallowed be thy Name*, we are hereby taught and intended in our Prayers, to express both our due *Acknowledgments*, and our hearty *Wishes* thereof. This Phrase seeming to involve both *Praise* and *Petition*; whereby we signify our *Confession of what is*, and our *Desire of what should be*.

1. Hereby we Acknowledge that God's Name is *Hallowed*; being worthy of all Glory and Praise; *By ac-* hereby conforing with that Seraphical Doxology, *knowledg-* continually employing the blessed Spirits above, *ing it is* so. of *Holy, Holy, Holy*; and confessing with the heavenly Host, in the *Apocalypse*, that he is worthy *Rev. 4. 8,* of all *Honour, Glory, and Power*; addressing God as he is called upon in Heaven, and framing our Hearts to the most Angelical and Divine Temper as becoming Prayer. But more directly,

2. Hereby we also express our hearty Desire, that God's Name may be Hallowed; and this implyeth this fourfold Petition, *viz.*

1. That God would by his Almighty Providence, *By desi-* direct and over-rule all things, both Good and Evil, *ring it* to the Advancement of his own Glory. Whereby we *may be so.* are



are taught to profess our Resignation to Providence, and to acquiesce in the Righteousness thereof, desiring its Vindication above all private Interests; that all the Works of God, the Actions of Men, and whatsoever Occurrences happen in the World, may bear upon them, and in them an Impression of Divine Glory, Power, Majesty, Wisdom, Justice and Goodness, so as to clear God's Perfections from the Aspersions of Atheism, and to make conspicuous his Holiness in the Conformity of all things, both to his Will and good Pleasure, in favour of Vertue and Discouragement of Vice; according to what God speaks by the Prophet Ezekiel, saying . . . *I will magnifie my self, and sanctifie my self, and I will be known in the Eyes of many Nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.*

Ezek. 38.  
23.

2. *That God would dispose and incline all his Creatures to render him, in a peculiar manner, all Honour, Praise, Duty and Service.* Hereby signifying our regret at the Dishonour his Name meets with in the World, through the abounding of Ignorance and Atheism; and our Desire of its speedy Suppression by the Punishment or Conversion of all obstinate Offenders, for the thorough Conviction

Pf. 9. 16. and speedy Instruction of all Men; *That the Lord*

---64. 9. *may be known by the Judgment which he executeth.*

---58. 11. *And all Men may fear, and declare the work of God,*

*and wisely consider of his doing. So that a Man*

*shall say, Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous;*

*Verily he is a God that judgeth in the Earth.*

That all Minds may thus entertain worthy Opinions of God; all Tongues speak well of him;

all Creatures yield Adoration to his Name,

and Obedience to his Will; that he may be

worshipp'd in Truth and Sincerity, with Zeal

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and Fervency; which is to *sanctifie the Lord God* <sup>1 Pet. 3.</sup>  
*in our Hearts*, in opposition to Idolatry and Pro- <sup>14. 15.</sup>  
phaneness. <sup>If. 8. 13.</sup>

3. *That God would Grant, more particularly, for our selves such a measure of his Gifts and Graces as may be requisite to enable us in our several Places, to promote his Glory.* Hereby, in this Sence, desiring that we our selves may be sanctified to contribute to the Service and Glory of our Sanctifier: *In our Thoughts*, Reverencing his Majesty, loving his Goodness, trusting in his Mercy, believing his Promises, fearing his Threats, acknowledging his Wisdom, adoring his Power, and depending on his Providence. *In our Words*, praising his Works, expressing Satisfaction in all his Dispositions, making mention of him with Reverence, bewareing ever to take his Name in vain, preserving our Speech, not only Innocent but savoury, suffering no corrupt Communication to proceed out of our Mouth, but that which is Good, to the use of Edifying, that it may minister Grace to the Hearers. And in our Actions, by an Exemplary Life of Godliness, Sobriety and Righteousness, letting our Light so shine before Men, that <sup>Eph. 4.</sup>  
*they seeing our good Works may glorifie our Father* <sup>29.</sup>  
*which is in Heaven.* <sup>Mat. 5.</sup>  
<sup>16.</sup>

4. *That even all things, any way relating to him, may receive also their due Regard from us, and all Men.* Hereby desiring, that every thing Sacred may be appropriated to sacred Uses, whereby that reverent Esteem may be preserved, that is hereby intended, and becomes due to him whose they are. That, therefore, God would give all Men Grace to spend *Holy Times* of Festivity and Humiliation, in the most Holy and Devout manner, wholly in those Services of God, to which they have

have been consecrated. That God would preserve the Beauty and Usefulness of his *Holy Places*, dedicated to his Worship, that they may be ever, by all, approached with Reverence, and secured from becoming the Scene of Civil, much less of Light or Evil Actions. That he would uphold the Dignity and Authority of all *Holy Persons* devoted to himself. That *Kings*, his Substitutes, may nor bear the Sword in vain, but to the *Terrour of Evil*, and Encouragement of *Good Works*, and may be duely Honour'd and Obeyed as his *Ordinance*. That *Ministers*, his Ambassadors, may never wittingly or willingly disgrace their high Character, nor suffer his *Holy Name* to be Evil entreated through their Fault; but may be welcomely Received, liberally Maintained, tenderly Loved, and honourably Respected, for their *Works sake*. That every Thing wherein God is interested, and whereby or wherewith he is served, whether *Revenues*, *Utensils*, or *Acts of Worship*, may never be Profaned, or become Promiscuous and Common, but remain Appropriated, and esteemed as Sacred to him. That, finally, his *Titles and Attributes* may never be given to any other but himself, nor he be called upon thereby, but in serious Worship and Devotion towards him.

So copious and large a Request do we present before God, when we Pray that his *Name may be Hallowed*.

The Reasonable-ness here-  
of. IV. Lastly, *The Fitness and Necessity of making this the first and chief Petition*, according to the Place it hath obtained here in the *Lord's-Prayer*; is grounded not on Chance, but Reason and Necessity, considered and recommended hereby to us,



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us, as an essential Qualification of the Duty of Prayer, by him that was the *Wisdom of the Father*. For,

1. *The Hallowing of God's Name is God's own principal Design*, intended by him in all his Works and Proceedings with the Children of Men; whether of Creation, Preservation, Sanctification or Redemption; all being done for the *Hallowing* and *Glorifying* of his own *Name*. *The Lord hath made all Things for himself*, [even for PROV. 16. the Manifestation of his own Glory,] saith *Solomon*. And every one that is called by my Name, I have created him for my Glory, saith God himself by his Prophet. Nor for this End received we only our Natural, but also our Spiritual Benefits; and are no less made *Saints* than *Men*, for the *Hallowing of God's Name*, being enabled to good Works, as our Saviour implies, that our Father which is in Heaven may thereby be *Glorified*. For this Cause, also, doth God preside over, to deliver and assist us by his *Providence*, commanding us to call upon him in the Day of Trouble, and promising to deliver, that he may be glorified for it by us. And so *Glory be to God on high*, we read, was the Consequent of our Redeemer's Appearance; and Father, I have glorified thee on Earth, the Consummation of it; plainly shewing that Heaven's good Will towards Man herein, was wholly designed to make way for the *Hallowing God's Name* here on Earth. The which being the ultimate End of all God's Dispensations, is rightly made the principal Petition of Man's Address to him by Prayer, whom to resemble is both his Duty and Dignity.

2. *This is the most Reasonable, and the only Tribute we are capable of rendering to God for all his*  
T Mercy



*Mercy and Goodness towards us.* It is the most Reasonable, because a just Restitution of what God is most sensibly defrauded of; and some kind of Reparation of the many Dishonours his Name suffers among us: And it is the only Return we are capable of making to God; to whose Happiness we cannot add; having nothing to give of our own, who receive all from him: Such being his infinite Self-sufficiency; that it is impossible he can receive any Good from them that receive their Beings from him. *If thou be*  
 Job 35. 7. *Righteous, what givest thou him? Or what receiveth he of thy Hands? Saith Eliku to Job.* And my Goodness extendeth not to thee, is a true Confession  
 Pf. 16. 2. made, tho' by the Man after God's own Heart. Adoration and Praise is all our Return for Divine Receipts. And,

3. *This is the best preparation of Heart for Prayer;* who are taught to do all our Performances to the Glory of God. A Sence of the Divine Honour being the only Affection that can sanctifie any of our Actions; rendring them acceptable, and testifying their Sincerity. Therefore it is only God's Name that we are taught to desire the Sanctification of, without any selfish and sinister Design; who will be sanctified by all that draw near unto him; not allowing us to ask our Daily Bread for our Lusts, but to glorifie him by it and for it; nor to beg Forgiveness of our Trespases, barely to escape being Punished, much less to make room for new Offences; but that hereby God's Mercy and Truth may be magnified, and his Creature restored to a Condition and Capacity actively to serve and glorifie him. And therefore this Petition we first make, because it is to be the End of all our other Petitions;

1 Cor. 10.  
31.

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ons ; without which no other Petition can be either rightly made by us, or profitably granted by God. Therefore,

4. Lastly, *This ought to bound and measure all our Desires* ; insomuch, that whatsoever we ask, this must be intended therein ; wherein all our other Requests are to Center, being asked in Subordination to the Glory of God ; which is all the security we have of being heard ; and will ascertain success, either in Kind or Compensation, to our other Petitions. For whether the particular Matter of our other Desires be granted or no, yet being presented with this Restriction, we shall have done our Duty, and if God's Name be thereby *Hallowed*, we shall succeed in our principal Request, and are obliged to remain satisfied. And we may assure our selves, that if we can but duely prefer the *Hallowing* God's Name, (as here we are taught) before all our other Desires, tho' to our present personal Damage, God will more abundantly Recompence our seeking thus his Glory, than that Request he hath denied us in, could possibly have done, had it been granted. We serve a kind and bountiful Master, that will surely Recompence us for any Honour we intend him ; and we serve a Wise and Powerful Master that knows how to Recompence in such Kind, and Manner, and Season, as shall be more suitable and more acceptable, than had we been suffered to have been our own Carvers. So that by Petitioning for the *Hallowing* of God's Name, we take the best and only Course for the certain supply of our own Needs. And it is the great encouragement and advantage of *Prayer*, that our principal Petition will be sure to be granted ; and therein our whole Desire fulfilled.

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This therefore is what our Hearts ought chiefly to be set upon, and our Bowels to yern after in all our *Prayers* to God ; suffering it to have the just precedency assign'd it therein ; Begging first, That God would glorifie himself, and dispose of us and all People that his *Name* may be *Hallowed*. Even so *Our Father* which art in Heaven, *Hallowed be thy Name*.

“ *Let the People Praise thee, O God, let all the*  
 “ *People praise thee ! Let an universal Belief*  
 “ *of thy tremendous Being, and a lively*  
 “ *Sence of thy Glorious Attributes bring thee*  
 “ *Honour and Praise from Us, and from all*  
 “ *Men ! Lord, evermore Glorifie thy self up-*  
 “ *on Us in all thy Works and Dispensations*  
 “ *towards us ; And give Us Grace and Wis-*  
 “ *dom to intend and promote thy Glory in all*  
 “ *our Designs and Actions ! Possess our Souls*  
 “ *with an holy Awe and Reverence of thy*  
 “ *Majesty, and due Respect to all things which*  
 “ *relate thereto ! That in all our Thoughts,*  
 “ *Words and Actions, we may Glorifie thy*  
 “ *Holy Name, and never Prophane any Holy*  
 “ *Thing, or Sacrilegiously invade what thou*  
 “ *hast set apart to thy self ! But that ac-*  
 “ *cording to thy Greatness, thou mayest*  
 “ *ever be Feared and Esteem'd, Worshipp'd ad*  
 “ *Prais'd throughout all the World ! And*  
 “ *that we thy Servants, living answerable*  
 “ *to thy Name we bear, may truly serve thee*  
 “ *in Holiness and Pureness of Living, to thy*  
 “ *Honour and Glory, through our only Me-*  
 “ *diatour and Advocate Jesus Christ our*  
 “ *Lord. Amen.*

S E R-

## SERMON XXXVIII.

ON THE

Second Petition of the LORD'S  
P R A Y E R.

Matth. vi. 10.

*Thy Kingdom come, —*

**H**AVING Prayed for the Advancement of God's *Glory* in the *First* Petition, the *Means* of Effecting it naturally follows in this *Second*. Wherefore after *Hallowed be thy Name*, we are taught immediately to say, *Thy Kingdom come*. Concerning which, it will be requisite to inquire,

I. What we are to understand by God's *Kingdom*.

II. How it may be said to *Come*. And,

III. What it is we Pray for, when we request the *Coming* of it.

I. Enquire we what we are to understand by God's *Kingdom*. And that both as *Appropriated* to him, *Kingdom*; and Govern'd by him.

I. As *Appropriated* to God; we difference it, by way of Distinction, from the *Kingdoms* of *Men*, which



which are *Subordinate* to this of God's; and from the *Kingdom of Satan*, which is *adverse* hereto; And therefore we are taught to say [*Thy*] *Kingdom*, meaning the *Kingdom of Our Father* which is in *Heaven*.

Ro. 13. 2. As for the *Kingdoms of Men*, they are the *Ordinance of God*, and subjected to his Dispose and Governance; wherein we are no way concerned to interest our Prayers, any further than for their being subservient and serviceable to the Divine Glory. And therefore it is not any one particular *Form of Government*, or *Monarchy of Man*, that we are to be solicitous with God about, but the *Dominion and Governance of God*, that will Over-rule that, and can render any *Form of Government* Happy to us.

And as for the *Kingdom of Sin and Satan*, since they are against the *Dominion of God*, it is the *Destruction and Ruin* of them we are to endeavour and pray for. Wherefore we desire only the *Coming of God's Kingdom*, for the over-ruling of *Men's*, and overthrowing of *Satan's Kingdom*, to the *Hallowing of the Name of Our Father* which is in *Heaven*.

2. Which *Kingdom of God*, as Govern'd by him, and considered in it self, is usually distinguish'd to be Two-fold, viz. *Universal and Particular*.

*Universal.* The *Universal Kingdom of God*, is that which the Ps. 108. *Psalmist* observeth to Rule over all; Even every  
19. Thing, whether in *Heaven* above, or *Earth* below, or *Hell* underneath, being subject to the *Power and Providence of God*, and unable to do any thing but by his *Permission*; and being under the *Restraint*, and within the reach of the *Punishment* of the Great and Sole Monarch of the Universe, who is the *Blessed*, and only *Potentate*, the *King of Kings*,

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*Kings, and Lord of Lords.* Which is the great 1 Tim. 6.  
 Consolation of wise and good Men, affording 15.  
 this Consideration, that the World doth not run  
 at random, neither is disposed of by foolish and  
 wicked Men, or by malicious and cruel Spirits,  
 But that all Things are in God's Hand, and are  
 acted under the inspection of an Infinite Wisdom  
 that sees all; are controuled by that Power that  
 is over all, and are guided by a Providence that  
 extendeth throughout all the World.

The Particular and Special Kingdom of God, is Particu-  
 lar.  
 that which he exerciseth over only a Select Com-  
 pany, which are his Church, Part Militant here on  
 Earth, and Part Triumphant already in Heaven.  
 The which, tho' it be not so large and extensive  
 a Kingdom as the former, yet is far more Excel-  
 lent; the Loyalty whereof is God's singular De-  
 light; and therefore is called his Kingdom of Grace,  
 as the other is of his Power.

The Militant Part of God's Particular Kingdom, Militant.  
 or Church, here on Earth, is Mankind considered  
 under the Dominion of Divine Government;  
 consisting Originally only of Two Persons; our  
 First Parents, Adam and Eve. Who soon turn-  
 ing Rebels, their Corrupt Posterity provoked God  
 to destroy the whole Race by a Flood, excepting  
 Noah, the only Loyal Subject, and his Family;  
 Concerning God's Government of whom, (tho'  
 we have but little Account, yet there is enough  
 Reason to believe that) it was by no other Laws  
 than those Remains of what at first were writ on  
 Man's Heart, except some few they might have  
 by Tradition, such as those who are called the  
 Precepts of the Sons of Noah. To which, (after  
 God had selected Abraham and his Family, and  
 with them made the Covenant of Circumcision)

he added his *Statutes*, and made particular *Revelations* of Will, and more especially to the Posterity of *Abraham*, to *Moses*, and after him to *Prophets*, sent by him both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*. And yet Men continued to Rebel even against the Divine Laws thus Published, Generally throwing off God's Yoke, Disobeying his Will, and refusing to be subject to his Authority; partly through the Wickedness of their own Corrupt Nature, and partly through the Instigation of those wicked and malicious Spirits, who having themselves Rebelled against their Maker, were Out-Law'd and Exil'd from Heaven, and have been ever since Industrious in seducing the Children of Men also from their Renewed Allegiance, to be Partners with them in their Final Rebellion. Insomuch, that *Many* so far backslided, as to become the Worshipers of *Evil Spirits*, *Most* Worshipped those that were *no Gods*, and *All*, but a very few, Worshipped the True God in a *False Manner*; and therefore *All*, without Exception, were become Disobedient, and Complaint made, that there was *none that did Good*,

Pf. 14. L. *no not One*, that did the Good which Man might  
&c. and ought to do in such Circumstances. By which general Corruption they put themselves under the Power of the Devil, who used them as his Vassals: They did his Will, and Worshipped him; and he did to their Estates, to their Bodies and to their Souls even what he pleased. So that this grand Usurper had in a manner thrown out the Government of God, whose of Right it was, and had set himself in the Throne, before the Coming of *Christ*, being then become the Prince of this World, whence it was but high time that he should be cast out.

Jo. 12. 31.

For



For this end, God sent his only Son (as before had been *Promised*, and was now generally *Expected*) in Human Nature; to Re-establish his Throne, and to Subdue and Vanquish this Grand Usurper of his *Particular Kingdom Militant* in the World, by force pulling him down, not suffering him to *King* and *God* it, as he had done, by his *Oracles*, by his *Visible Appearances*, and so frequent *Possessions* of Men's Bodies. And the way our Blessed Lord took to effect this, was by his Holy, true and perspicuous *Doctrine*; By his most excellent, useful and blameless *Life*, by his unparalleled *Sufferings*, by his extraordinary *Works* which he wrought, by his *Resurrection* from the Dead, by his wise *Institutions* and *Ordinances*, by enduing his *Apostles* and first Followers with Power of doing mighty Things, by giving the *Holy Spirit* to all that seek it, and, in short, by doing all that was necessary to be done for the Reduction of the *Rebellious Race of Adam*, to the Allegiance of their Rightful Sovereign, and Restoration of the Honour and Acknowledgment of God's Government in his *Church*.

Hereupon this Administration of the *Messiah* hath in a peculiar manner obtain'd the Title of a *Kingdom*, and is represented under this Notion in the *Scriptures*; nothing being there more usual than to mention the *Gospel-State* under the Titles of the *Kingdom of God*, and of *Heaven*.

This *Kingdom* may be considered either as *Ex-ternally Administer'd*, or as *Internally Received*. As *Externally Administer'd*, it implies no other than the Dispensation of the *Gospel* in its *Ordinances*, which are the Means of Grace, common to the whole *Visible Church*; and is that *Kingdom of God*, which our *Saviour* threatned should be took from the



Matt. 21.<sup>43.</sup> *the Jews, and given to a Nation, bringing forth the Fruits thereof. As Internally Received, it imports the end of these Means, even the Grace of God ruling in the Hearts of the Elect, the Invisible part of Christ's Church Militant, subjecting their Souls unto the Obedience of Christ; and admitting them into a Communion with God and all Saints.*

In the first of these Notions, *the Kingdom of God* is of a much larger Extent than in the latter; and in both of them it is but an imperfect State and Condition here on Earth. For as Externally considered, the *Church Visible* comprehends all Professors of the Truth, whether they be True Professors or no, wherein *many are Called, tho' few Chosen*. Whereupon the Scriptures compare it to a *Net*, wherein is caught of every Kind of Fish, both good bad; To a *Floor*, whereon is mingled Chaff with Wheat; And to a *Field* wherein Tares grow among good Corn; And therefore the Imperfection hereof consists in a *Mixture of Good and Evil Persons*. Whereas the *Invisible* part of it comprehends only true Believers, and the Obedient Subjects of God's Kingdom of Grace; being a Select Number of only a few, in comparison, distinguished by the Effectual Operation of the Holy Spirit of God upon them. The Imperfection whereof can therefore consist only in a mixture of Good and Evil in such Persons; whose Good is always accompanied with some Evils, and Infirmities mixed with their Graces; who yet See, but as through a Glass darkly, and know but in Part; which is the best, because truest account of the State, from first to last of the particular Kingdom of God, in that part of his Church which is Militant here on Earth, But then there is,

The

1 Cor. 13.  
21.

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*The Triumphant part of God's Special Kingdom, or Triumphant Church in Heaven*, consisting of such glorious Angels as never fell, and of such glorified Saints, as have recovered from their Fall, into an Incapacity ever to fall more. And this is the Kingdom of <sup>1</sup> Cor. 15. God, which St. Paul tells us, *Flesh and Blood cannot inherit*; being, though the same with that which

is here Erected, yet the Maturity and Perfection of the *Church-Militant*; free from its Imperfections of Sorrow and Sin, and Temptation; even the *New Jerusalem*, wherein *no unclean thing can enter*; the chief and ultimate Object of our Desires. <sup>Rev. 21.]</sup> 27.

And yet even this State of *God's Kingdom* are we to apprehend under a two-fold Notion; either, as *Inchoate* or *Censummate*.

*The Special Kingdom of God in his Church Triumphant in Heaven Inchoate*, is its present State and Condition, wherein we shall find it upon our immediate removal into it hence by Death, before the General Resurrection and Final Judgment. Which tho' now perfect Felicity, in respect to our present Capacities, yet in respect to its self it will not be *Full*, until the whole number of the Elect shall be called, and the whole number of the Called shall be glorified. For, till all shall be called, the number will not be compleat, nor the *Body of Christ* at its full growth; and till all shall be glorified, though the Joys of Saints in Heaven be perfect, yet their Person's and Rewards are not; while their Bodies are yet under the Arrest of Death, and their Souls made naked without their Bodies, bearing the Ignominy of Sin; and the Man consisting of both Soul and Body together, is yet short of God's Promise, and his own Hope and Expectation, in a joyful and glorious Resurrection, Conquering the last <sup>1</sup> Cor. 1. Enemy <sup>26, 25, 5.</sup>

Consum-  
mate.

- Enemy to be destroyed, putting all Enemies under the Feet of our heavenly King, and rendring his Kingdom then every way perfect. And therefore this we call the Kingdom of God, in Heaven Consummate. Which is its future State and Condition consequent upon the Resurrection and Final Judgment, when Sin and Death shall be utterly abolished, and Heaven be perfect in the full number of its Subjects, and every Subject be made perfect in his full Reward and Capacity. His Soul being for ever Blessed in the Beatifical Vision of*
- Mat. 25. God, and his Body unconceivably Glorious by  
21. the redundancy of that Glory, which fills the  
1 Thes. 4. Soul, and both ravish'd with the Joys of the Lord,  
17. remaining for ever with him, to inherit as the Bless-  
Mat. 25. sed of the Father, this Kingdom prepared for them  
34. from the Foundation of the World, and now com-  
No thou- pleted in them, in the Consummation of all things.  
sand years So that among all the Notions of a Divine King-  
Reign of dom, which we are taught here to Pray for, there  
Christ on seems to be no room, nor ground left for that  
Earth. which the *Chiliasts* or *Millennaries* fondly dream  
of, viz. The Fruition of Pomp and Pleasure,  
and all temporal Happiness upon Earth for a  
thousand years together after the Resurrection.  
An Errour of great Vogue as well as Antiquity,  
yet now is generally rejected, as a Conceit too  
gross and earthy, to suit the spiritual Kingdom  
of God and Christ: Who refused all the Felic-  
ties of this World, and would not so much as
- Lu. 12. 14. meddle in dividing of an Inheritance between two  
Brothers; nor assume even the common Right of  
Nature, what the *Foxes*, and *Birds* enjoy, a Place  
whereon to lay and rest his Head; declaring that his
- Mat. 8. Kingdom was not of this World; taking all oppor-  
20. tunities to draw off his Disciples from world-  
Jo. 18. 36. ly



ly Expectations by him ; giving them no Encouragement of any Honour, but Salvation in his Kingdom ; and proposing no Crown, but the *Crown of Life, and a Crown of Righteousness* ; instituting them to a Life of severe Watchfulness and Holiness here, and of eternal Rest and Glory hereafter.

Rev. 2.  
10.  
2 Tim. 4.  
8.

And thus then we see what the *Kingdom of our Father in Heaven* is, both *Universal* and *Peculiar*, as to its State, both *Militant* here on Earth, in its Parts, both *Visible* and *Invisible* ; and *Triumphant* in Heaven, both *Inchoate* and *Consummate*. The next thing is to shew,

II. *How this Kingdom may be said to come.* For, this word implies it to be a *Kingdom*, either not *Begun*, and as yet not *Erected*, or but in its *Progress*, and as yet not *Perfect*. And therefore its *Coming* must import either its *Setting up*, or its *Improvement* ; because that which is yet for to *Come*, is not yet arrived to that State in which it is to be both expected and desired. To attain, therefore, to the full Sense and meaning hereof, it must be applied to those several Notions of God's *Kingdom*, according to which it *varies* its meaning. And so,

The Coming of God's Kingdom.

I. *In respect to the universal Kingdom of God,* *Universal.* this Petition is only capable of an *Analogous Use* ; since that cannot be said to *Come*, which ever hath been, nor to be more *Perfect*, which ever will be the same. For the over-ruling Providence of God hath invariably, and in Perfection governed the World ; so as, that no *Time* can be said wherein God did not hereby rule, nor can any *Degree* be supposed or desired, wherein he could govern the World better. And therefore the *Coming* of this *Kingdom* can only import the Manifestation of its Power,



Power, and Beauty to our regard, so as to be submitted to, and glorified among us. But then,

Particular.

2. In respect to the particular Kingdom of God, set up in his Church, whether Visibly or Invisibly, Militant in this World, or Inchoately, and consummately Triumphant in Heaven, this Petition is applicable to both Notions of its Coming, supposing it both, yet to Come, and already in Being.

By the Church Militant's Coming, as to the Visible part of it, must be understood, (as to its Futurity,) the successful and speedy Propagation of the true Religion, and the Revelation of the Kingdom of the Messiah in the World; in opposition to all the Powers, and Malignity of the World, and Wiles of Satan. In which Sense this Petition Primarily, was proper to the time it was first taught; and more especially befitted our Lord's first Disciples, when the Kingdom of God, or the State of Religion under the Evangelical Dispensation was a Coming; according to that of our Saviour, *I tell you, of a Truth, there shall be some standing here which shall not taste of Death, till they see the Kingdom of God.* Whence it became the Converts of that Age, in Zeal to God's Glory, and Charity for Men's Salvation, to Pray that Christianity might soon and effectually be propagated over the World. To which Purpose, they were taught to Pray that the Lord of the Harvest would send Labourers into his Harvest; and that the word of the Lord might run and be glorified. But Secondarily, and in Parity of Reason, it concerns us, and will oblige Christians of all Ages, to Pray for the further Coming of Christ's Kingdom, though already in Being (God be ever praised for it!) among us, yet that it may grow and be increased to the largest Extention of Place, and to the highest

Luk. 9.  
27.

Matt. 9.  
38.  
2 Thes.  
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highest Intention of *Degree*, universally and perfectly in the World, so that the *Gates of Hell* may Mat. 16. be never able to prevail against the *Kingdom* of 18. God's *Visible Church-Militant* on Earth.

And then, as to the *Invisible Part* hereof, by the *Coming* of God's *Kingdom*, must in both Notions, be meant, the saving Effect of *Christ's Gospel* on the Hearts and Lives of Men. That such Professors as are yet under the Power of Sin and Lust, may by the Grace of God, be speedily *Converted* and that such Saints, as are already *Converted*, and in a State of Grace and Salvation, may be more and more strengthened and perfected therein : That the Minds of all may be subdued to the Obedience of Faith, avowing the Subjection due to God, and sincerely, and intirely yielding Obedience to his most Just and Holy Laws.

And, more particularly, signifying our Desires hereby, that the *Kingdom of God*, in this Sense, may come into our own Hearts; by Grace to *Rule* and *Govern* there; *Quelling* all exorbitant Passions and vicious Desires; *Protecting* from all Temptations, and the Power and Malice of Spiritual Enemies; and *Disposing* to an intire Subjection to the Divine Will, and a willing Compliance with all God's Commandments; which is the *Coming* of the *Kingdom of God within us*; en-Luk. 17. joyned to be sought by us *First*; speedily and 21. principally. And therefore in this Notion it al- Mat. 6. so *Challengeth* a considerable Place in our Prayers 33. *ers.*

By the *Church Triumphant's Coming*, being, as to us yet, wholly *Future*, can be meant nothing else, but God's bringing us, and the Souls of all the Godly departing this Life, in his good appointed time and manner, thereto in Heaven; and

and his hastning to accomplish the number of the Elect, to reveal the fulness of Glory in the *Second coming of Christ to Judgment*; when the whole number of Saints shall be *Sealed* up, and have their perfect Consummation and Bliss in the Glorification of both Soul and Body, after the general Resurrection.

Rev. 7. 4.

From what hath been said, it will now be easie to Collect, (which is our last Enquiry proposed on this Argument.)

What  
prayed for  
hereby.

III. *What it is we pray for, when we thus Request.* For attending to the premised Distinctions of *God's Kingdom*; it is evident that,

1. In respect to his *Universal Dominion*, we are intended to Pray,

*That God would vindicate the Power, and Justice of his Providence more visibly, to the Hearts and Consciences of Men, to the Glory of his own great Name, and the good of Mankind in the Encouragement of Obedience and Punishment of Impiety. That Rebellion may not be suffered to take heart, or get ground, by too long a Conivance, or Delay of just Vengeance; nor injured Innocency be exposed ever to Despair, or grow Impatient by any seeming dis-regard, or desertion. But that as God rules and exercises his Authority over all, so it is the Hearty Wish of every good Man, that he would ever more and more own the Cause of his Servants, and suppress his Enemies; that the Wickedness of the Wicked may come to an End; and the Righteous rejoyce when he seeth the Vengeance; and God receive more Glory to himself, when all the World shall be forced to say, Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous; Verily he is a God that judgeth in the Earth.*

Psal. 7. 9.  
---58. 10.

---11.

2. In

2. In respect to his *Special and particular Dominion*, we pray further therein,

1. *That God would be pleased to plant his Church where it is not*; that his Gospel may attain to a Perfection of Extent, and our Charity be expressed towards our whole Race; even *Jews, Turks and Infidels* hereby sharing in our Prayers; to whom we wish for the *Coming of God's Kingdom*, and Reduction of them from the *Kingdom of Darkness*, into this of his *Dear Son*; according as God promised, and Christ merited, to give all Nations of the World, to his Son for his Inheritance, and the utmost parts of the Earth for his Possession.

2. *That where ever God's Church is already Planted, there his Authority may be duely submitted to*; That as those who were his Enemies, being brought into the *Visible Part*, may be effectually reduced, till they also become Members of the *Invisible Part* of this Church: That all professors may lead Lives answerable to their Profession. And having named the Name of Christ, depart from all Iniquity.

3. *That to this End, there may be a free and right* 2 Tim. 2. *Dispensation of Gospel Ordinances*; which are the 19. appointed Means, both of introducing and Establishing the *Spiritual Kingdom of God*, for the Reduction of *Rebellious Lusts, and Affections*, as well as *Men's Persons*. Upon which account the word of God revealed in the *Scriptures*, is called the *Word of the Kingdom*; containing the *Laws*, by Mat. 15. which God governs his Church, and will judge of 19. his Subjects Obedience; the due observance whereof, is necessarily desirable for the *Coming on* of God's Kingdom. And because the Administration hereof is entrusted with Men, to whom the *Word of Reconciliation* is committed; we there- 2 Cor. 3. fore, hereby Pray also,      U      4. That 19.



4. That God would give his Church able Ministers of the New Testament, that may know rightly to divide the Word of Truth, and to give every one his Portion in due Season. And since, after all, Success depends intirely on the Divine Blessing; who, though even Paul plant, and Apollos water, can alone give the Increase; therefore also we Pray,

2 Tim. 2.  
15.

1 Cor. 3.  
6.

5. That God would be pleased to accompany the outward Administration of his Ordinances, with the inward Operations of his Spirit; which can alone make them effectual to turn Men from Darkness to Light, and bring them from under the Power of Satan into the Kingdom of Grace here, and Glory hereafter. For the uninterrupted Perfecting whereof, we further Pray hereby,

6. That God would Protect, Defend, and continue such his Kingdom, in its Power among us, and not in his Wrath remove his Candlestick from us, as he hath in his righteous Judgment done from the other once Glorious Churches; not suffering our Ruin by Divisions, Superstition, Idolatry or Prophane-ness, Gathering out of his Kingdom whatsoever doth Offend; and establishing Truth, Unity, Peace and Holiness in our Days, and throughout all succeeding Generations, to the Consummation of his Kingdom. Which is the last thing, we hereby are intended to Pray for, viz.

Mat. 13.  
41.

7. That God would hasten the coming of the Triumphant Kingdom of his Glory; Daily admitting more and more into the Heavenly Fellowship, till the Number as well as the Joys of the Elect be compleated; and their longing Expectations fully satisfied, in the everlasting Redemption of their Bodies from Death, and Glorification of the whole Man in Heaven, and Manifestation of the

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the Divine Justice on Sinners, and putting a timely End to this state of Sin and Misery, by the second coming of Christ in his Glory, to <sup>2</sup> Tim. 4. 8. *Crown such as Love his Appearing.*

Indeed, when Good Men consider how dreadful a Vengeance will then seize on Sinners, they (out of Pity to them, that Pity not themselves) pray that such may first submit and come in; and to their own Loss, are content with the Delay of perfect Glory; Desiring nothing more than that Heaven's Chaire may be fuller, and the Musick sweeter, and God be so much the more Glorify'd by the encrease of them that shall be saved. And therefore we pray, that tho' the *Kingdom of Glory* be our Happiness, yet that the *Kingdom of Grace* may first *Come* into the Hearts of all that will receive it. And with such *Proviso*, who can be blam'd, or forbear to long and pray for the final Consummation of all Things? Nor is it to be wondred, if they, who are weary with Slavery, wish for their Liberty; and desire the *Coming* of that Happy Day, which will be the end of all their Evils, and the beginning of Joys ineffable, that shall never end.

Here, alas! Good Men *Serve*, but then they shall *Reign*. Here they are Despised and Afflicted; Vext with their own Corruptions and Infirmities, and grieved for the Sins of Others. Here they are Poor and Disconsolate, short of their Hopes, and full of Cares and Fears; Which, when Christ's *Kingdom*, as *Mediatour* shall have *an End*, and, as One with the Father, shall *Come* <sup>1</sup> Cor. 15. 24, & in Perfection, they shall not only be done away, but exchanged for boundless Felicity, and endless <sup>28.</sup> Glory.

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Let then the *Guilty and Ungodly Persons* fear and tremble at the *Coming* of this *Terrible Day* of the *Lord*. Let the truly *Pious* long for, and rejoyce at its *Approach*. Let *All Men* prepare for it; by securing to themselves an *Interest* in the *Kingdom of Grace*, and then the sooner, it will be so much the better for them, to be admitted into the *Kingdom of Glory*.

Rev. 22.  
20.

“ O Thou *Blessed and only Potentate*, the *King*  
“ of *Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, Display so  
“ thy self in the *Power and Beauty* of thy  
“ *Over-ruling Providence*, as to command  
“ thereby *Universal Submission and Praise*,  
“ to the *Glory* of thy *Governance*, in the  
“ *Acknowledgment of Rewards for the Righteous*,  
“ and *Belief* of thy being a *God that*  
“ *judgeth in the Earth*. Let the *Kingdom* of  
“ thy dear *Son* command all the *Kingdoms*  
“ of the *World*, and finally overthrow the  
“ *Kingdoms of Antichrist, Sin and Darknes*; *s*  
“ *Extending it self to the utmost Parts* of the  
“ *Earth*; shewing *Light* to them that sit in  
“ *Darkenes*; And ever, effectually, guiding  
“ all in the ways of *Peace* that lead to *Glory*.  
“ Even so come *Lord Jesus*! Let thy *Name*  
“ be *Hallowed* in the coming thus of thy *Blessed Kingdom*! *Amen*.

S E R.

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# SERMON XXXIX.

ON THE

## Third Petition of the LORD'S PRAYER.

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Matt. vi. 10.

—*Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in  
Heaven.*

**H**AVING Prayed for the Advance-  
ment of God's Glory in the *First Petiti-*  
*tion* of this our Lord's Prayer; for the  
*Means of Effecting it* in the *Second*;  
We are *next* rightly taught to Pray for its *Mani-*  
*festatation* in this *Third* and Last of those *Petitions*,  
wholly respecting the God whom we Worship  
hereby. And therefore, after *Hallowed be thy*  
*Name, Thy Kingdom come*, we say, *Thy Will be*  
*done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*, which is the  
only Instance manifesting either God's Name to  
be *Hallowed*, or ~~His~~ *Kingdom* to be *Come*; Both  
consisting in the due Obedience of Men's Lives  
to the Divine Will.

The Words, for Illustration, may be distin-  
guish'd into *Two Parts*, viz. The *Petition* it self;  
*Thy Will be done in Earth*; And the *Measure* or



Proportion of it; *As it is in Heaven.* Not only a Performance, but the *Due Performance* of Duty, constituting an acceptable Obedience.

I. *The Petition it self, is, Thy Will be done in Earth.* To understand the full Import whereof, it must be consider'd. 1. What God's *Will* is, that we here Pray may be *Done*. 2. What the *Doing* of it implies. 3. Why this Particle of Appropriation *Thy* is annexed to the *Doing* of it. And, 4. By whom it is to be done, since prayed that it may be *Done one Earth*.

God's Will. I. *It is the Divine Will* we are to inquire into the Nature of. For, as God's *Name* was the Subject of the *First Petition*, and his *Dominion* and *Kingdom* of the *Second*, so now his *Will* is of this *Third*. Which, tho' but one Indivisible Act, yet in regard of its Manifestation to us, it falls under a double Notion, and is no less profitably than commonly distinguished into the *Will of his Purpose*, and the *Will of his Precept*.

Purposing.

Eph. 1. 11.

I. *God's Purposing Will*, is the Determination of his *own Council*, with respect to what shall be Done by himself; Which to us is *Secret*, *Irresistible* and *Boundless*; Extending it self to all Events whatsoever, whether *Good* or *Evil*; Effecting the *Evil of Punishment*, and permitting for wise and gracious Ends, even the *Evil of Sin*: Wherein God's *Will* is always *Done* as much on *Earth* as in *Heaven*; Even whatsoever the Lord pleaseth, that doth he in *Heaven*, and in *Earth*, in the *Seas*, and all deep places. Which is only made known to us by the Event, and always *Secret* till it is *Done* out of the reach of our *Inquiry* to find out; and

Pl. 135. 6.

Ro. 9. 19.

out of the Verge of our *Power* to prevent, for *who* hath resisted his *Will*? Which there is no frustrating,

ing, since every Thing will surely, within the Periods set by God's Eternal Purpose, have its most perfect and full Accomplishment, however Prayed for or against; bringing even many Things to pass which we ought not to Pray for, yea, ought to Pray against. So that the *Doing* of God's *Will* of Purpose can have no place in this Petition any further, than as our Submission thereto may be looked upon as a part of his *Commanding Will*, bringing to pass those Things which we are obliged to Pray for in Obedience thereto. For,

2. *God's Commanding Will*, is the Determination of our *Duty*, with respect to what God Wills us to Do, made known to us either in the *Laws of Reason and Nature, written on Men's Hearts, their Conscience also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts,* *Com-manding.* *Rom. 2. the mean while, accusing or else excusing one another ; 15.* Appearing manifestly to be the Will of God, since not disannull'd, but confirm'd and added to by our Saviour; Or Revealed to us whether in his Works, which is God's Will concerning us, disposing of our Persons and Conditions by his overruling Providence, and obliging us to a *Passive Obedience*, and in this Sense to pray, *The Will of the Lord be Done!* And *Not as I will, but as thou wilt!* Or in his Word, which is God's Will to be Done by us, governing our Actions, and conforming our Lives to the *Good and Acceptable and perfect Will of God*, calling for our *Active Obedience*; and in which Sense we are taught to *Desire of God in this Prayer*, that we may *Serve, and Obey him as we ought to Do*; and *as it only is done perfectly in Heaven*; whereby we are to be led, tho' it may appear by the Event, contrary to God's *secret Decree belonging to God, but Revealed* *Deut. 29. Things 29.*

*Things only belong to us, and to our Children.* And therefore, as hereby we Pray, that nothing befalling us from God may be gain-said, or impatiently resented by us; so that every thing coming from us, may be Well-pleasing and Acceptable to God, being agreeable to his Command, and accomplishing *his Will, even our Sanctification.*

1 Thes. 4.

3.  
Which is  
done,  
when  
Obeyed.

2. *The Doing of this Will of God*, then, implies the Conformity of our Lives and Actions thereto, as to the only Rule of our Obedience. For, then only is *God's Will Done*, when his known Pleasure is Obeyed, in performance of his Precepts, and Submission to his Providence; The one obliging to *Holiness*, the other to *Patience*, and both being equally parts of our Obedience. For, as by the Holiness of our Lives, we own God as the Supreme *Law-giver*, so by the sufferings of Patience, we own him as the Supreme *Lord*, and in both, alike, we own the Authority of his *Will*, exacting our Obedience. And therefore,

Actively.

1. *God's Will is Done* when it is Obeyed *Actively*, implying our Knowledge and Acquaintance with his Laws he would have done; as also our *Approbation* of, and *Consent* to do them; and, finally, our sincere *Endeavour* to fulfill the same. In which respect, we Pray in this Petition then,

1. *That God would make known to us, and to all Men the Will of his Good Pleasure.* That we may be taught of God to understand our Duty, his

Jo. 6. 45.  
Ps. 119.  
105.

*Word* being given us, as a *Lamp unto our Feet*, and a *Light unto our Paths*; and his Good Spirit of Power and Life, accompanying its Ministration to open our dark Understandings, to discern and receive the Truth, in the Purity and Perfection thereof, so as to inflame our perverse, and

ob-



obdurate Hearts, and Affections with the Love of it. Wherefore, we further Pray hereby,

2. *That God would affect our Hearts by whatever he shall make known to us of our Duty; to do it with Love and Liking, without weariness or opposition, as a Law that is Holy, and Commandment never Grievous, but Holy, Just and Good.* Bewaring of the Sin of the Pharisees and those Lawyers, who are said to have Rejected or defeated the Counsel of God against themselves; and of those Jews who put the Word of God from them, resisting, provoking or defying his Overtures of Reconciliation, by an obstinate Disobedience. And because the end of all Divine Revelation, is to free us from the Servitude of Sin, and to conform us wholly to God's Will commanding us; therefore are we hereby especially to Request,

3. *That God would give us his gracious Assistance, in all our Powers, to endeavour actually, and sincerely to fulfil the same: That in all our Thoughts, Words and Actions, we may be sincerely and universally subject, and obedient to the Just, and righteous Laws of his Kingdom; and become Holy as he, who hath called us, is Holy in all manner of Conversation.* To this end, herein Pray we,

That God would purge our Hearts from all vain, sinful and unprofitable Thoughts; and give us, who are not sufficient of our selves, to think any thing good or acceptable as of our selves, Sufficiency to conceive Thoughts becoming the Presence of him before whom they are all Naked and Legible, and worthy the Heart where Christ is pleased to make his Residence; whereby God's Will may be done, and his Laws observed in all the most secret, and inward Operations of the Soul; and he who is a Spirit, be served in Spirit and in Truth.

That,

Rom. 7.  
12.

1 Jo. 5. 3.

Luk. 7.

30.

Act. 13.

46.

1 Pet. 1.

15.

2 Cor. 3.

5.

Heb. 4.

13.

Jo. 4. 24.



That, also, God would *set a Watch before our*  
 Ps. 141. 3. *Mouths, and keep the Door of our Lips, that we may*  
 —39. 1. *no way offend against him with our Tongues*; by the  
 Heb. 12. *Dew of Heaven, and the Blood of sprinkling, quench-*  
 24.  
 Jam. 3. 6. *ing all that Fire of Hell, which is naturally in-*  
*herent in that unruly Member*; that so it may e-  
*ver be restrained from all Blasphemous, Atheistical,*  
*Calumniating, Uncharitable, False, Vain and Un-*  
*profitable words*; and its *Speech be always with*  
 Col. 4. 6. *Grace, seasoned with Salt, to the Glory of God and*  
*Edification of those we converse with*; that we  
*may know how we ought to answer every Man, and*  
*utter all our words*; as to be Registered and ac-  
 counted for, to Acquit or Condemn us hereafter  
 for ever. It being by our Words, that our Saviour  
 hath told us, *We shall be justified, and by our Words,*  
 Matt. 12. 37. *that we shall be condemned.*

That God, finally, would by his Grace, ex-  
 citing and restraining our Wills, over-rule and  
 guide all our Actions, so as to enable us to fulfil  
 his Will, in a Holy, Reverent and Humble Be-  
 haviour towards himself; in a Just, Charitable,  
 Meek Behaviour towards Men; and in a Sober,  
 Temperate, and pure Behaviour in Respect to our  
 selves, in every thing adorning the Doctrine of God our  
 Saviour; contending towards Perfection, being  
 Tit. 2. 10. *thoroughly furnished unto all Good Works, as Men of*  
 2 Tim. 3. 17. *God, and Loyal obedient Subjects of his Special*  
*Kingdom; to do his Heavenly Will on Earth.*

And because, after all, the best of Men fre-  
 quently fall short hereof; and sometimes relapse  
 even from that whereunto they have attained;  
 therefore, in Case of Transgression, we also are  
 hereby intended to Pray for the Grace of Repen-  
 tance, which though it doth suppose God's Will  
 not to have been faithfully Done by us, yet is the  
 only

only Remedy left in such Cases, in the due Use whereof God will be again actually obeyed, and his *Will be done*.

Such is the *Doing* of God's Commanding *Will*, in the Duties of an *Active Obedience*; when we Address him with this Petition.

2. Whose *Will*, we observe all to be *Done*, being *Obedied Passively*; implying a thorow Conformity of *Our Wills*, to the *Will of God* in every Event befalling the *Publick*, or our own *Particular Persons*; whether by his *Will*, as *Absolute*, or *Natural*, or *Occasional*, or *Permissive*, or *Prophetical*, or *Promissory*, or *Inflictive*, which are various Manners of executing the Divine Purpose in the *Earth*; in which Respect, though God's *Will* must be *Done*, whether our Prayers be concerned therewith or no, yet nevertheless it is his Will and our Duty, to accompany the *Doing* of it with our *Fiat*, to testify our Complacence therein, and pay him the Just Tribute of Submission due from a Creature to its Maker, as to the Supreme Lord of the Universe. And therefore, also, in this Respect,

1. *That God's Absolute Will may be Done*, we Pray; that what we cannot hinder the *Doing* of, we may not only submit to, which Necessity will force us; but be pleased with, and thankful for, as the ordering of the most wise and kind Father, designed for our Good in the end, to which, Duty doth oblige us.

2. *That God's Natural Will may be done*, we al- Ezek. 33. so Pray, that the same Mind may be in us as in <sup>11.</sup> him; who *desireth not the Death of the wicked*, but the Happiness of all Mankind, administering all necessary means to bring them thereto; that what God Will's, we may be inclined to Desire, by

by rendring our Charity Catholick, and extending our Prayers even for all Men, expressing our Good-Will to God's boundless Mercy, and readily taking this Opportunity, of becoming here-  
*in merciful, as our Heavenly Father is merciful.*

Lu. 6.36.

3. *That God's Ocasional Will may be done*, whereby he punisheth Impenitents, whether by *Judgments* in this World, or *Damnation* in the other World. We further Pray, not that any may be Ruin'd or Damn'd, which is contrary to the *Charity* God Wills us to have; but that the *Will* of God being executed, in whatever, even the severest Dispensation, we may, according to Duty, rest satisfied therewith, and learn, and fear thereby, to the Acknowledgment of his Dominion, and *Hallowing of his Name*.

4. *That God's Permissive Will may be done*, whereby he suffers Sin to be, we again Pray, not for its abounding out of any liking to Sin; but for its restraint, and our own Security therefrom by Divine Grace; since God suffers it to be for the necessary *Exercise of our Vertue*, and *Perfecting* all Obedience.

5. *That God's Prophetical Will may be done*, whereby he hath foretold some Events Decreed by his Secret Will of purposing, in their proper Season, to be brought to pass, and which accordingly cannot but come to pass; yet we Pray, hereby, that we his Creatures may with longing Expectation, Faith and Desire wait for the fulfilling thereof; and duely render to him the Glory of their Accomplishment, and persist in praying for the same, as the means appointed by God himself, who though having *spoken*, will do

Ezek. 36.  
63, 37.

*it; yet will for this, be enquired of to do it.*

6. *That*

6. *That God's Promissory Will may be done*, whereby he hath Will'd us all the good things, both for this Life and the next, upon the gracious Condition of our Obedience, we moreover, Pray, that through his Grace enabling us to perform the Condition, it may be to us according to God's Word; Expressing the thankful acceptance of the Comfort, both of Expectation and Fruition of all his Favours. Lu. i. 38.

Lastly, *That God's Corrective or Inflictive Will may be done*, whereby he lays Afflictions and Troubles upon his best Servants, we Pray, not that Affliction may be our Lot, (which, is an Evil, attended with great Temptations, and productive of no Good to us by any proper Efficacy, but only by the Providence and Grace of God overruling, and changing its Nature) but only that being made our Lot, we may receive it chearfully, bear it patiently, improve and amend by it wisely, with intire Resignation to the Will of God, who ordered it for us, who will do us no wrong, who intends our Good, and knows it to be better for us, than if we had been left to our own Choice. Wherefore, in imitation of him, who taught us to Pray, we hereby rightly say, *Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt, O Father, let thy Will be done*, even thus, both *Actively and Passively* by us! The Particle of Appropriation [*Thy*] may be conceived to be here annexed to the doing of God's Will, upon a double Account; both *Emphatically* and *Exclusively*. By the first Commanding the Preference, and by the other the Opposition of the Divine Will to all others. Hereby, therefore teaching us to Pray,

1. *That God's Will may be Principally, and Especially done*; as what only ought to be regarded ly.  
in



in the Execution of our own, or any other's Will, which are ever to be submitted, and only to be *Done* in Subserviency hereto ; we being mindful to serve God, even while we serve our selves or others, and bewareing to incurr his Displeasure, whosoever frowns, and whatsoever Inconveniences may be hazarded.

*Exclusive-  
ly of our  
own  
Will.*

2. *That God's Will may be only done, in opposition to our own Will, the Wills of Men, and the Will of Satan.*

*In Opposition to our own Will, we hereby pray for those Christian Graces of Resignation and Self-Denial ; as being satisfied with the Conduct of Providence, and mistrusting the Passion, and Perverfeness of our own Choice.*

*Other's  
Will.*

*In Opposition to the Wills of Men, we beg for Christian Courage, and Constancy in our Duty to God ; against the prevalency of all evil Perswasions and Customs to prevent us ; without regard to the Humours or Powers of Men ; not longer living to the Lusts of Men, but to the Will of God ; in Defiance of Flattery, and in Despite of Threats to the contrary ; appealing for our Justification to their Consciences, to Judge, whether we ought to obey Men, rather than God ; And referring our selves for Safety, to the Divine Power and Providence, with assurance that our God whom we serve is able to deliver us. And,*

*Satan's  
Will.*

*In Opposition to the Will of Satan, we pray for Deliverance from his Captivity ; and Strength, and Aid to withstand and overcome all Temptations and Devices ; that we may no longer do the Lusts of our Father the Devil ; watching against, and resisting our own corrupt Affections, moved and enflamed by that subtle Destroyer ; neither may be taken Captive by Satan at his Will and Pleasure ;*

2 Tim. 2.  
26.

sure; avoiding his Snares, rejecting his profers, casting off his Service, and giving up our selves intirely to the *Will*, and Service of God, as having him only to please, and desiring that all other's Wills may be either subservient to, or over-rul'd and frustrated by him, whose *Will*, especially and only, we thus pray may be done.

4. Lastly, *By whom it may be done*, is signified to us by the Place assigned it here in *Earth*. For, herein only rational Nature being capable of apprehending, or obeying God's *Will*, we cannot but suppose our selves hereby taught to pray.

*That the Will of God may be done by us Men on By Men. Earth*; meaning by the *Place*, the *Persons* therein, who are Lords thereof, and for whose Service it was made, and is maintain'd. Wherein though God's *Will* is more exactly fulfill'd by any other Creature; since even *Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour*, fulfil God's Word, and the Ordinance of their Creation; yet can his Positive Commands, or *Will of Precept* be observed only by Man; who being the only Creature concerned therein, is therefore the Person here prayed for, by whom God's *Will may be done in Earth*; implying also,

2. *That the Will of God be done by the whole Race of mankind*. This Expression in *Earth*, not admitting any limitation to this or that particular Place or People, but extending the Petition to all Nations, wheresoever spread abroad upon the Face of the Earth, for the Assistance of God's Grace, to enable them all to do his *Will*; that his ways may be known upon Earth, and his saving Health among all Nations; manifesting his Kingdom to be Come, which by the Predictions of the ancient Prophets, was to have the Heathen for its Inheritance, and the utmost Parts of the Earth for its — 2. 8. Pos-

*Possession.* And because of the *Antithesis*, the Expression stands in with respect to *Heaven*; where room for the Charity of our Intercession by this Petition, seems to be denied us, we cannot do less than hence also conceive our selves to be admonish'd to pray,

*While on Earth.*

3. *That the Will of God be done by Men only that are on Earth*, and before their Removal hence to *Heaven*; where the *Doing* of it is beyond the Charity of our Prayers, and calls only for our Imitation here *on Earth*; where it being *Done*, at the best, with great Difficulty, and but imperfectly, such Charity is Needed; and therefore confined to the *Living*, to prevent our misplacing it on the *Dead*. And therefore, especially, we hereby Pray,

*Incontinently.*

Lastly, *That all, During their abode on Earth, may wholly be employed in doing God's Will*; referring nothing thereof to a Future State; nor minding any thing more in this Present State; since this *Earth* is the Place; and while we are yet *in it*, the only time for God's *Will* to be *Done* by us; which this being once over, will be executed upon us accordingly; and they that have not *done* God's *Will on Earth*, shall never be admitted to do it in *Heaven*; on whom God will *do it* with everlasting Vengeance in *Hell*. Here therefore is the Place, and now is the Time of Obedience, whereby to make our Fortune for Eternal Ages. Hereafter will be too late; and no possibility left to *Do*, what was neglected to be learnt here, since there is no Work, nor Device in the Grave, whither we are going; but what we carry hence along with us. And therefore we pray, That *We*, and *All Men, Living*, while Life and Opportunity lasts *on Earth*, may be so wise as to

Eccl. 9.  
10.

endea-



endeavour to *Do God's Will on Earth*, not only *That* we may, but *As* we hope to *Do it* our selves, and *it is now Done, in Heaven.* Which brings us to consider the other Part distinguish'd in the *Petition*, and allotted this Discourse, being

II. *The Measure or Proportion of the Performance of God's Will on Earth.* Which is, *As it is in Heaven.* To illustrate which, also, it may not be amiss to Consider. 1. What we are here to mean by *Heaven.* 2. After what manner *God's Will* may be supposed to be *Done* there. 3. How near we ought to desire to imitate that *Doing of it in Heaven*, while we are here in *Earth.* And 4. Why Obedience to *God's Will in Heaven* is necessarily made the Pattern for our Obedience thereto in *Earth.* A brief Consideration of which Particulars will give us the full Import and compleat the Notion, of the whole *Petition.*

1. By *Heaven*, then, whence our Pattern for the *Doing God's Will in Earth* is to be fetch'd, we are, by the same *Figure*, to mean its Inhabitants, as we before understood by the *Earth*, the Men whose proper Possession it is. Where, also, tho' God himself and Heavenly Bodies are Performers of the *Divine Will, in Heaven*; Yet not of that *Will*, we before have been taught to pray might be done in *Earth*, even *God's Commanding Will*, to which alone this *Petition* is referr'd, and whereof only the Blessed *Angels in Heaven* are the Celebrated Executors, mentioned in the *Holy Scripture*, as the *Ministers of God that do his Pleasure*,-----  
*Hearkening unto the Voice of his Word*; being the Eldest and the most Faithful of all *God's Creatures*; who first *Sang his Praise at the Creation*, and never since deserted his Service, and whose Obedience therefore is the most Exemplary, of all *God's*

By Angels.

Pf. 103.  
20, & 21.  
Job 38. 7.



Servants; worthy our Emulation, and becoming our Imitation, being to consort with them to be Happy for ever. Of them, therefore, we are to learn Obedience here, that with them we may be admitted to serve and enjoy God hereafter: Praying that God's *Will may be done in Earth* by us, as the Blessed Angels *do it in Heaven*.

2. *The Manner of whose doing it there*, being proposed as a Pattern, must necessarily imply that Perfection, which is wanting in our Obedience, and can alone render it acceptable, such as it ought to be. Admonishing us, that it is not sufficient only to *Do God's Will in Earth*, unless it be, in some Proportion, *done as the Angels do it in Heaven*. Obedience being only so far Acceptable, as it is Angelical; being qualified with those Heavenly Dispositions that have rendred the Obedience of *Angels* remarkable. Such are

1. *Chearfulness*. Those obsequious Creatures being represented to us as *always beholding the Face of our Heavenly Father*; in a continual Posture ready to receive and execute the Divine Commands, without the least Shifting, Murmuring, Reluctancy or Perswasion.

2. *Speed and Agility*. The *Angels* being said to *have Wings and Fly*, who *do God's Commandments* at the first hearing, [*hearkning to the Voice of his Word*, (or, as it may be read) as soon as they do *hear the Voice of the Word*. Which is Executed by them, as soon as it is spoke; being never gain-said, never disputed, never neglected or delayed, whose Obedience is always upon the Wing, and God's *Will* never undone, any longer than till they know and can perform it.

3. *Universality*, whereby Obedience doth not ever appear more *Chearful* and *Active* towards any

One

Univer-  
sally.

One than *All* God's Commandments. In respect whereto the Blessed Spirits in *Heaven* are said to follow the *Lamb*, wheresoever he goeth; giving equal attendance to the whole Will and Service of God; 4. Rev. 14. and as readily *Descending* to Minister to the Meanest Saint, stooping to the Service of an Inferiour; as *Ascending*, to Execute the most astonishing Wonders, being employed in Matters more Great and Glorious. Heb. 1. 14.

4. *Fervency, Zeal and Affection.* Upon which account, *Angels* are said to be a *Flame of Fire*; spending themselves with Light and Heat in God's Service. Whose Obedience is never either Frozen or Dull, nor yet over-kindled into any Conflagration, beyond the Bounds of Duty, by blind Passion, or over-heated Affection. Zealously. Ps. 104. 4.

5. *An Humble Reverence.* For which reason the *Seraphims*, even the Highest Order of those Glorious Spirits, are represented attending the Lord sitting upon his Throne, with their Faces covered; Even the Sense of their Perfection no whit obscuring the Sense of their Duty; But the Sense of their Duty encreasing the Sense of that infinite Distance that is between God, and the most Perfect of his Creatures in *Heaven*; Infomuch that the nearer to God, the greater are all the Prostrations of Divine Worship. And, therefore, it is said that the *Four and Twenty Elders* fell down before him that sate upon the Throne, and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their Crowns [submitting all the Ensigns of their Dignity and Glory, to do Homage] before the Throne, of the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. So Essential is Reverence, and a Godly Fear to render Obedience Angelical and Heavenly. Reverently. Isa. 6. 1, 2. Rev. 4. 10.

Constant-  
ly.

Mat. 24.

13.

Rev. 7.

15.

Lastly, *Constancy and Perseverance* is that which Crowns Obedience in Heaven, and is there Crowned it self with Glory and Life Eternal. For he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved; And it is expressly said, they serve God Day and Night; being never weary of their Work there, no more than they can be weary of their Happiness; where God's Service is perfect Happiness, and the Creature's Obedience its everlasting Glory.

To such Perfection of Obedience it is, we are taught to Pray, that we may aspire and contend after while in Earth, and at last attain to and compleat it in Heaven. Fashioning our imperfect Services in imitation of the most perfect Pattern; and expressing our Desires, by our utmost Endeavours, that God's Will may be Done in Earth, even as it is, in this most sublime Manner, in Heaven.

3. The nearness of our Resemblance whereof, must yet be measured by the Imperfection of our present State: For that it is impossible for our Obedience to have in it that Perfection, for which that of Angels is so renowned, is evident from the Remains of Sin and Ignorance, incapacitating either to apprehend clearly, or perform steadily every Particular the Divine Will may oblige us to; abating, in great measure, the Chearfulness, dulling the Activity, corrupting the Uniformity, quenching the Fervency, puffing up the Humility, and interrupting the Constancy of performing God's Will on Earth, which is no Impediment to the Doing thereof in Heaven. And, therefore, as there is no Reason to conceive that we ought Absolutely to Desire this; so there is no doubt, because in the lowest Sense the Words are capable of, but that,

1. It



1. *It ought to be hereby our Desire, that our Obedience on Earth may come as near to this of the Angels in Heaven, as the Present State of Human Nature, and the Dispensation of God's Grace will permit it to Do.* Which is not only Possible but Necessary, to raise our Aims and Endeavours to the utmost Pitch, which otherwise will flag, and sink below the Pattern that is not above our Powers; for which Reason we are Commanded to be Perfect, even as our Father which is in Heaven is Perfect. *Mat. 5. 48.* The higher our Aims and Desires are set, the further will they carry Endeavours; and he that intends not God an Obedience that is somewhat Angelical, will be apt to grudge him even what is Human. However,

2. *Obedience may and must necessarily Resemble what it cannot possibly Equalize.* And therefore the Particle, [*As,*] here, is to be taken as a Note rather of Similitude than Equality. Obliging our Obedience on Earth not to differ in Kind and Manner from their's, who do God's Will in Heaven, tho' we cannot come up to the Rate and Degree of the Pattern they set us there; But to be qualify'd, as we are able to do it, like their's with *Chearfulness* and *Activity*, and *Uniformity* and *Fervency*, and *Humility* and *Constancy*; without which no Obedience to God will be acceptable in Earth, nor answer either our Duty or Capacity. So that *Heaven* is an imitable Pattern for Obedience on Earth, to which we are to conform our Endeavours, tho' we can never reach the Practice.

4. Nor seemeth it without Design that a Pattern so perfect and peculiar is proposed, *There being proper Reasons that Obedience, particularly in Heaven, should be made the Pattern for our Obedience in Earth.* For, X 3 1. This



Which Re-  
com-  
mends  
Obedi-  
ence.  
Heb. 12.  
23.

1. *This Recommends and Reconciles to us the Service of Obedience.* Since it is the Employment of Heaven, where it is Done by our Elder Brethren, the Angels and Spirits of just Men made Perfect; to whom we are related, and whom we ought to resemble, and Hope shortly to be joined with, in this very Service in Heaven, being trained up therein, as they were first on Earth. For, who can desire to be otherwise on Earth, than they are in Heaven? Angels and Saints, tho' they have many Privileges above Man, yet an Exemption from Homage and Service is none of them: And if to Do God's Will in Earth seems grievous, neither could we be pleased amidst the Felicities of Heaven. And therefore herein we fare as well as the most Happy Creatures, as well as we can Deserve, or ought to Desire; and what is an Employment becoming an Angel, cannot be unworthy the Duty and Happiness of Men, who desire and expect to be [ἰσάγγελοι] like as the Angels of God in Heaven. Such an Encouragement and satisfaction is it; when we pray to God, *Thy Will be done in Earth*, to add, as here we are needfully taught to say, *As it is in Heaven*; which serves also

Mat. 22.  
30.

Excites  
Endea-  
vours.

2. *To Excite and Animate our very utmost Endeavours in the Service of God.* Our Example set us to Copy after, being in Heaven, obliging to endeavour to do more than what generally is Done in Earth. So that it is not the Obedience of our Neighbours, that is any Rule to measure Ours by; some of whom, tho we may excell, and not fall short of others; yet so long as we are short of our standing Pattern, there can be no just Reason to remit our Sedulity, or ever think we have Done enough for God in Earth, who are to Do

his

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*his Will as it is done in Heaven.* Others Sloth or Deficiencies can be no Excuse for Ours; neither is it what is *Done on Earth*, that is, to govern our Performances; who are directed to look up only to Heaven. And tho' we may not be so bad as Others, yet if we endeavour not to be good as the *Angels*, we fall short of our Duty, and Act contrary to our Prayer. The which, further, tends,

3. *To Depress in us all high Conceit of any the best of our Performances.* Who, after all Endeavours, fall so vastly short of the Example set before us; and notwithstanding all that we can do, *Do* so little, and so impotently for God, who can neither need, nor be beholding to us for our Service here in *Earth*, having an innumerable Company of Blessed Spirits to *Do his Will* perfectly in *Heaven*. So that comparing our own Practice with our Pattern, which seems therefore to be mentioned together in this Petition, we must needs think as well as *Say*, (as he who taught us this Prayer also, instructed us to *Say*,) *when we shall have done all those Things which are Commanded us, we are unprofitable Servants.* However,

*Depresses  
Conceit of  
Merit.*

Lu. 17.  
10.

Lastly, *This may be intended as a certain security to the Innocence of our Imitation:* Who live mostly by *Example*; and have but very rarely any for *Doing God's Will* here among us in the *Earth*; and those we have, are very Uncertain and Imperfect, apt to Deceive, and not without their Spots and Defects, wherein we are most inclin'd to imitate them. And therefore for the gratification of our Humour, and security of our Innocence, we are directed to look beyond this state of Imperfection, and to take our Pattern from *Heaven*, where the Example of Obedience is perfect, and without flaw, which only while we imitate,

*Indulgeth  
Imitation.*

tate, we *Do God's Will*, and begin our *Heaven* here in *Earth*.

To *Heaven*, therefore, where our *Father* is, we lift up our Heart and Hands in Prayer, with earnest Desires and Admiration of his Glory, and Dominion; begging of him, for the full Manifestation of both; the Modelling of this World by the Harmony of the other; that for the *Hallowing* of his Name, and *Coming* of his Kingdom, his Will may be Done in *Earth*, as it is in *Heaven*.

These are the *Three* first Petitions in this Prayer relating to *God*; which have been thus Explain'd and are summ'd up in our *Catechism*, whereby we are taught to desire our Lord God our Heavenly Father, who is the Giver of all Goodness, to send his Grace unto us, and to all People, that we may Worship him, Serve him, and Obey him as we ought to do; (even in this lower part of his Kingdom, where so many are yet wholly in Rebellion, and others frequently Revolting;) and which is as it is in the upper part of his Kingdom in *Heaven*, where all Obey, and continue to be Happy for ever To which happy State, that we, also, may from this veil of Miseries in due time arrive, Do thou, O God,

“ *Work in us all to Will and to Do according to*  
 “ *thy own Good Pleasure!* Enduing us, by  
 “ thy Grace, with such a Knowledge, Like-  
 “ ing and Assistance in our Duty, that in all  
 “ our Thoughts, Words and Actions, we  
 “ may Sincerely and Universally, with a  
 “ just Abhorrence of all our past Miscar-  
 “ riages, and unwearied Circumspection a-  
 “ gainst all future Ones, submit to the Just  
 “ and

“ and Righteous Laws of *thy Kingdom*; no  
“ longer Living to the Lusts of Men, but to the  
“ Will of God! Desiring above all Allure-  
“ ments, and against all Oppositions ever-  
“ more to please Thee, and to be pleasing  
“ unto Thee! Quitting our own Affections,  
“ and courting the Favour of *none on Earth*  
“ besides Thee! kindly resenting all the Dis-  
“ pensations of thy Wise Providence! thank-  
“ fully Rejoycing in the Day of Prosperity, and  
“ wisely Considering in the Day of Adversity,  
“ allotted whether to our Selves or Others!  
“ That God may be to us All in All, and  
“ we to him wholly Devoted to his Service  
“ here on Earth, with the like Alacrity, A-  
“ gility, Uniformity, Fervency, Reverence  
“ and Constancy, wherewith he is served,  
“ and we desire to serve him Eternally in  
“ Heaven. Amen.

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SER-

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S E R M O N    X L.

O N   T H E

Fourth Petition of the LORD's  
P R A Y E R.

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Matth. vi. 11.

*Give us this Day our Daily Bread.*

**A**FTER the *Three* first *Petitions* in this *Prayer*, which we observed to look up directly into *Heaven* upon the Face of God, follow the rest, which look up indeed to Heaven also, upon the *Giver of all good Things*, but reflect withal upon *Our selves* and present *Necessities*, both *Spiritual* and *Temporal*; the *Latter* in this, and the *Former* in the following *Petitions*.

The *Petition* therefore, in the *Text*, we will consider as more directly for *Temporal Blessings* only. For which *Praying* we are taught to say, *Give us this Day our Daily Bread*. For the *Explanation* whereof we may distinguish in the Words these *Five Particulars*, viz.

I. The *Subject Matter* of the *Petition*, or that which we *Pray* for ; which is *Bread*.

II. The

II. The Specification thereof, as to its Kind or Quality. It is [ *Daily* ] *Bread*.

III. The Right or Property we laid Claim to herein. Being [ *Our* ] *Daily Bread*.

IV. The Ground and Reason of such our Right and Title thereto. Which is only *God's Gift*, obliging us, when we beg it, to say, *Give us even our Daily Bread*. And

V. The Limitation hereof in respect of *Time*, restrained to the *Present*, and suffering us only to say, *Give us [this Day] our Daily Bread*.

I. *The Subject Matter of this Petition*, or that *By Bread* which we are taught to Pray for hereby, *is Bread* <sup>*is meant.*</sup> signifying not only bare *Food*, which is most simple and common ; But also by a *Synecdoche*, or the usual manner of Speech, *all the Conveniencies of Life* contributing to the Delight and comfortable Enjoyment of it, allowed us hereby to Pray for. So that hereby we are Authorized to Pray for Temporal Blessings, and Encouraged to desire all the Emoluments of this Life, yet restrained to Moderation and Sobriety in such our Desires.

I *Hereby we are Authorized to pray for Temporal Blessings* ; forasmuch as we are taught to ask God for *Bread*, which is only Temporal Provision for the Body. And therefore the Care thereof seemeth no way inconsistent with the most exalted Devotion ; neither doth it derogate from the Spirituality of this Heavenly Form of Prayer ; nor unbecome the Notice of God ; nor seem too trivial and base, for the Ardency of Men's Desires to fix on ; nor is there occasion to Allegorize the Word ( as some have done ) to signify *Christ* himself, who is called *the Bread of Life*, Jo. 6. 35. and *the Living Bread* which came down from Heaven, — 51. meaning Food for the Soul only. For our  
*Heavenly*

Mat. 6.  
32.

*Heavenly Father knows that we have need of Temporal Blessings also; and that while we are in Mortal Bodies we can neither Hallow his Name, nor Do his Will in Earth without Bread to support Life, which depends upon these Things. And when we pray that his Will may be Done in Earth, as it is in Heaven; we do neither mean nor expect that we should subsist here as they do in Heaven, without Corporal Nourishment and Refreshments; the addition whereof is made by God himself, the Reward of having sought first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness. So that had a Petition of this Nature been wanting, this Prayer would have been deficient. And therefore having therein been accordingly taught to pray for Divine Blessings, such as the Hallowing God's Name, the Coming of his Kingdom, and Doing his Will, whereby we have paid God his due Tribute of Respect, we are allowed and directed to request Good of him for our selves; and to sue out our Claim to the Reward annexed of thus seeking first the Kingdom of God, beginning, as Nature prompteth, with our Desires for preservation of our Beings and Lives; as necessary to capacitate us to receive and enjoy other good Things from him; and in conformity to Divine Providence, and our own Necessities, begging Temporal Blessings, as the Earnest and Encouragement to ask for Spiritual; that the Sence of bodily Exigencies may no way hinder importunity for the Necessities of the Soul. Yea,*

*Comfortable.*

2. *Hereby we are Encouraged to Desire for our selves, not only bare Necessaries for the Support of our Beings, but even all the real Emoluments of this Life, for the maintenance of our Well-Beings therein. For Bread, though literally and strictly*  
importing

importing only the most Coarse and common Food, sufficient only to sustain bare Life without Delight or Variety : Yet being also a necessary, and principal kind of Food, accompanying the Use of all other Kinds, by a common Figure, is frequently used in Speech, to signify much more than it literally imports, even all other Conveniencies of Life, of like necessity for our comfortable Support. Whence, to *set on Bread* signifies, in the Scripture-Language, even a Feast; <sup>Gen. 43. 31.</sup> And to *eat Bread at the Kings Table*, a Royal Entertainment; yea, the Perfection of *Blessedness* is <sup>2 Sam. 9. 7.</sup> expressed, by *eating Bread in the Kingdom of God*. <sup>Lu. 14. 15.</sup> So that by begging *Bread*, in this Prayer, of God, our *Saviour* hath encouraged *Christians* to Desire every thing Necessary for their outward Support; not intending to abridge them of any of the Conveniencies of this Life; who hath taught them a Petition, comprehending them all in one word, which it would have been too tedious to have enumerated more particularly in so compendious a Prayer. But then, also,

3. Lastly, *Hereby we are necessarily restrained to Moderation, and Sobriety in such our Desires*: <sup>In Moderation.</sup> Being directed here to beg even Conveniencies after the most modest manner, in the most Parsimonious Expression, under the Notion of *Bread*, being what is necessary and fit for us. And therefore it is not Superfluities, not Luxurious Plenty, serving to please wanton Appetites, or to humour a fickle Phancy, that we are to Pray for; but <sup>Prov. 30. 8.</sup> *Food convenient* and necessary Accommodations, tending to support Life and satisfy reasonable Desires. So that by asking *Bread*, we must have a respect to our present Circumstances, and Pray for temporal Blessings in proportion to our Wants, and



and particular Conditions only. And therefore what may be *Bread* to one, would be *Luxury* for another to desire; and what may be *Luxury* to one, would scarce be *Bread*, but *Penury* for another only to obtain; the only allowable end of all Requests of this Nature, being to maintain Life comfortably, with Content and Thankfulness, and not to pamper it *Luxuriously* in sensual Fulness and Splendour.

Such is the *Matter of this Petition*, allowing, encouraging, and moderating our Desires of temporal Blessings.

*By Daily-Bread is meant a Sufficiency for.*

II. *The Specification hereof*, as to Kind or Quality, is express'd in the annexed Epithet, terming it *Daily-Bread*. Concerning which, though great variety of Interpretations have been made, yet do the most and best generally concur, (wherein we may well enough acquiesce) in its signifying a *Sufficiency of worldly Conveniencies*; referring it usually to the before hinted at request of *Agur's*, viz. *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches; feed me with Food convenient for me*. So that as by Praying for these temporal things under the Notion of *Bread*, Bounds were set to our Desires after them; so by being directed to call them our *Daily-Bread*, we are instructed how to measure out those Bounds, by a mean between *Poverty* and *Riches*, securing us from the Affliction of *One*, and the Danger of the *Other*. And therefore, hereby we Pray for temporal Blessings, sufficient to satisfy all the Wants of *Nature*, to answer all the real Occasions of our *Conditions*, and to quiet the Cravings of our *Desires*.

I. 1. *By Daily-Bread, we Pray that the Wants of Nature may be satisfied*; whereby the Comforts of Life are enjoy'd; and which it is not only law-  
ful

ful but necessary for every Man to pray for; forasmuch as Life destitute of, or straitned in its Conveniencies is not only Burthensom, but useless. Penury and Want, naturally enfeeble the Mind, and either utterly incapacitate it for any generous Undertaking, or else make it Act more slowly, and exposeth to many and dangerous Temptations: Therefore adds *Agur, lest I be poor and Steal, and take the Name of my God in vain*, as the Reason of his fore-mentioned Petition; intimating that extreme Poverty and Want of Daily-Bread (such as a Man cannot well want for a Day) is naturally a strong Temptation to Discontent, or Fraud, and murmuring against God. And therefore since not to have a comfortable Subsistence is much worse, than not to subsist at all, it appears to be but very reasonable that Man, being one of the noblest of God's Creatures, should be very earnest to desire that which God generally vouchsafeth to all inferiour Beings; and particularly a Competency of our *Daily-Bread*.

2. *By which also, we Pray, that all the Occasions of our several Conditions may be answered.* Which though not necessary to the Preservation of Natural Life, yet are necessary to maintain our Civil Life in the State and Condition, Providence hath placed us. For it being the Divine Pleasure to make it necessary, that there should be Distinction of Degrees, and Conditions among Men in this World; it must be according to his Will, to pray for the Support and Preservation thereof; and consequently, for such a Provision as is most suitable to it. So that Men in High and Publick Stations, of Noble Birth, Renowned Note, of Eminent Employment, or under great Charge and Burthens

-----V. 2.

The Occasions of our Conditions

Burthens, are allowed hereby to enlarge their Petitions for temporal Good things ; and a larger share of *Bread* is but *Daily*, or sufficient for them, which would be superfluous for others to have, and Extravagancy in them to Desire. A single leav'd Grass does not need the Sap, that a Tall and spreading Tree does. And therefore, for such to pray against Want, is doubtless to ask for much more than would be Excess to others, who take up a narrower Room, and have fewer Occasions to be supplied. And yet herein, it becomes all Ranks of Men, ever to submit their Desires to the Will of God, and Interest of their Souls ; without particularizing the Kind, or directing the measure of the Boons they beg ; not only because their own Desires will be too apt to blind their Judgments, and to represent that which is too much, scarce enough ; but also, because he to whom they pray, and to whom belongeth the Disposal of all things, is both a better Judge of what is sufficient, and is ready enough to bestow it, without their Prescription, suitable to every One's State and Interest. Beyond which as none can really Need, so are none hereby allowed to extend their Desires. Not only having no Warrant, but a tacit Inhibition herein for so doing : And therefore,

*The quieting of our Desires.*

3. Lastly, By this Specification of our temporal Supplies, we are intended to rest contented with whatever in Return to our Prayers God shall allot us. For, he who teaches us to pray only for *Daily*, or a just Competency of *Bread*, directly herein forbids the Desiring of more ; this being as distant from Abundance, as it is from Want ; it consisting in the Mean between both ; and intending to preserve us from being imposed upon, whether

by

by Covetousness or Discontent. And though the Enjoyments of this World are in themselves indifferent, and are ordained for Man's Use, and even Abundance thereof is God's Gift and Blessing, by which it is Men are said to be made Rich, Prov. 10. yet are they not such Blessings as are allowed the Liberty of Men's Desires; being no Blessings to such, as covetously Crave, restlessly hunt and gape after them, yea and are Discontented, and murmur if they fall short thereof. *They that will be Rich, saith, St. Paul, speaking of such as would not confine their Desires to a Competency, fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction.* Abraham and Jacob, and Solomon and David were all Possessours of great Abundance, wherewith God blessed them, but, none of these carved for more than their *Daily-Bread*, or made their own Desires the Carvers of their Abundance; which belongeth only to Divine Providence, with whose Allotments we are to rest satisfied, as a Sufficiency, and more than any can deserve or demand therefrom, and which God can bless to us, and thereby make the *righteous Man's Little, better to him, than the great Abundance of many Wicked,* therein giving him his *Daily-Bread* in the best Manner, in a less Compass; much sooner, more certain, and more calmly, uninterruptedly and lastingly, than in any other Proportion of this Worlds good whatsoever. Beyond which, the utmost of Man's Ambition ought never to transport his Desires, as being the best Portion; and what *Our Heavenly Father who knows what is best, and how to give good Gifts, and is ready to do so to them that ask him,* hath taught us to Pray only for. And therefore *having Food and Raiment,*

Y

which

1 Tim. 6.

Pf. 37. 16.

1 Tim. 6.  
8.



which is our *Daily-Bread*, and as much as we can really Need, or is allowed us to be Solicitous for, it becometh us *herewith to be Content*. If God give more, we may with Thankfulness receive it from, and endeavour to use it for him; but more we may not ask; and, if God sees fit to withhold more from us, this will suffice, and may content us, as all we have any Claim in. For so also

As Our's  
it obligeth  
10

III. *The Right and Property we lay Claim to herein*, is intimated, by expressing it to be [ *Our* ] *Daily-Bread*, that we are to pray for. And which may serve to admonish us of the Necessity of *Industry, Honesty, Contentment* and *Charity* herewith, that alone can make it properly *Our's*. And therefore when we thus Pray, for the *Daily-Bread* that may be *Our's*, we hereby oblige our selves,

Industry.

1. *To Industry in our several Callings*. For tho' it be God's Gift, and our Duty to beg it from, and depend upon him for it, yet 'tis only our Endeavours, that make it *Our's*; without which we are not to expect it to drop down from Heaven into our Mouths; it being dispens'd as the Effect of our *own* Concernment, and the Reward and Encouragement of an *Active Life*, which makes it truly *Our Bread*. For Man was ever designed, even Originally, for Industry; and therefore, was not without his work, no not in *Paradise*, where he had every thing provided ready at hand; whence being Exil'd, the necessity thereof became increased to him, both as a just Punishment for his Offence, and an expedient Remedy for his Needs. So that now much less hath any Man a Dispensation to eat the *Bread of Idleness*; who if they will not work, neither should they eat, faith

Prov. 31.  
27.  
2Thes. 3.  
10.

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saith the *Apostle*, intimating hereby the forfeiture Idleness maketh of all Claim to a Maintenance in this World; and that whatever abundance thereof any one may be possessed of, yet 'tis but usurped, though without Wrong to any other, yet being without Merit of his, while it occasions an uselefs Life, and is used to maintain Idleness. Before, therefore, we can rightly call any *Bread Our's*, something we must do in our several Callings and Places, to earn and deserve it, answerable to the end of that Life, it is given to support and Cherish. And we beg not for *Bread* wholly of God's Dispensation, or of another's Procurement, without our own Care and Industry for it, which is the appointed Hand by which it is to be reacht out to us, that every Man may know, and thankfully take his own thence. But, moreover, this obliges

2. *To Justice and Upright Honesty*, in procuring our *Daily-Bread* by whatever Labour: From whence alone Propriety is derived, being grounded on Human Laws and Constitutions; the Violation whereof, makes Endeavours Fraud or Rapine; and there is nothing we can call *Our's*, which is not so, or which ought not to be so, by the Sentence of the Law under which we Live. So that Industry is not all that procures us a Title to our Possessions. The Knave that lives upon his Craft, and the Robber that gathers by Violence, though they may eat *their Bread in the sweat of their Brows*, not without excess of Toil and Anxiety, yet nevertheless do injury to others they detain it from, and Usurp to themselves what they have no manner of Right to call their's. We have therefore no Encouragement to address God for any thing, but what is rightfully *Our Own*;

*Own*; who is a *God of Truth*, the great Friend of Simplicity and Sincerity, the Hater of Falshood and Guile; and therefore in begging of him [*Our*] *Daily-Bread*, we Pray for temporal Blessings to be endeavoured after, in a lawful regular Manner; and beg God's Blessing not on all, but only on honest Endeavours, desiring that *Integrity* Ps. 25. 21. *and Uprightness may preserve us*; that whatever share hereof he shall vouchsafe us, it may be *Our Own*, without Injury or Injustice to any; and our Possessions may be Wealth, which it may be lawful for us to Enjoy, and not spoil, which lays us under a necessity to Disgorge. We are further obliged,

Content-  
ment. 3. *To rest satisfied with our own Lot, and not to Covet other Men's.* For the infinitely Wise Governour of the Universe, who alone hath the Disposal of the Fortunes of this Life, hath with great Variety, and in differing Proportions distributed them, as he will, to every particular Person; wherewith all ought to be satisfied, as their just due, without snatching from another, or Coveting more than what God thinks fit should come to their share. And therefore, though hereby we are not restrained from the Liberty of begging new Boons at the hand of God; yet we are obliged never to do this thro' any present Uneasiness with *Our Own*, or envious Desire after anothers Allotment; but with a grateful Sense of what we have already received, we may beg the Continuance thereof to us; and its Enlargement so far only, as the necessities of our Circumstances reasonably require, and God sees fit and agreeable thereto; with Consistency to the Order and Distinction of his own Disposals; which we are satisfied to submit to, and intend not to disturb, or confound by



by unreasonable Desires, but to conform our selves to by *Asking*, this being made the Condition of having only what is intended for us, and may come to our share in a just and honest manner, so as no Body may be the worse for our fareing the better, nor we the less satisfied being so well as we are. And thus making not another's Enjoyment, but our own Wants the measure of our Desires, we then Pray for the *Daily-Bread*, that is *Properly Our's*, belonging to us, wherein no other's Interest is concern'd, and ready to be given us, upon our asking for it. And yet are we not to account any of our Acquests hereby so peculiarly *Our's*, but also to take our selves obliged,

4. Lastly, *To Enjoy them in Common with others, Charity.* by a *Charitable Communication*. For, though we have a personal Property, derived to us from an honest Industry, and agreeable Necessity, in our Temporal Enjoyments, so as to warrant our calling them [*Our*] *Daily-Bread*; yet being taught by our Lord in this his own Prayer so to call them, it may serve to admonish us, that we have them not for our selves alone; but as a Joynt-stock, for the Use and Service of all our Fellow-Members, as Need and Opportunity shall require. Neither doth this takeaway the Property of [*Our*] *Bread* from us, but only instruct us in the Nature of *Christian Property*; the Laws whereof never suffer any thing to be accounted so much a Man's own, as to Authorize him to deny another to share therein, so far as the one's Ability, and the other's Exigence doth prompt. For no Man is born to live only for himself; and least of all a *Christian*, whose *Charity* ought to be as *Catholick*, as is the *Church* he is a Member of; and which derives to us the Benefit of what we  
Y 3 Claim



Claim to have a Title in. The Charitable Man's Bread being most his own, who by his *readiness* to  
 1 Tim. 6. *distribute*, grows *Rich therein*; and by *casting it up-*  
 18. *on the Waters*, secures its Possession, being sure to  
 Eccl. 11. *find it after many Days*. And therefore, in beg-  
 1. ging the Bread that is *Our's*, we beg it not only for our selves, but also, so far as we shall have to spare, and other's Needs require, for the Use of all our poor Brethren, and all Men in the World. Such being the *Christians Bread*, and such only *Our's*, wherein our Title may be, either firm or beneficial to us.

Our Ask- IV. The Ground and Reason of such our Right and  
 ing infer- Title to Our Daily-Bread, is here intimated, and  
 eth. acknowledg'd by us, to be God's Gift; we being taught to say [*Give*] *Us Our Daily-Bread*; implying these two things, viz. That our Dependence for all worldly Enjoyments is intirely upon God; and that he *bestoweth freely* upon us whatsoever we have of them.

Our De- I. Our Dependence for all worldly Enjoyments is  
 dence on intirely upon God: Here taught and acknowledg'd  
 God. by Supplicating his Bounty even for our *Daily-Bread*; who alone is the great Lord and Proprietor of Heaven and *Earth*, which is the Lord's  
 Ps. 24. 1. *and the Fulness thereof*, and which he gives and distributes to whom, and in what measure he himself pleaseth. And therefore in coming to him for the Gift of these things, we Pray to God for both the Possession, and Blessing of Our *Daily-Bread*.

I. That God would bestow the necessary Conveniences of this Life upon us; which neither our Labour, nor Prudence, nor Cunning, nor Chance can help us to, without his Commission; there being nothing in the World in our Power any further,  
 than

than God vouchsafeth to put it; to whose Bounty we wholly ascribe all we have or expect.

2. *That God would Bless to us whatever he is pleased to bestow upon us.* Without which nothing we have, will benefit us, or be *Our's* any other-wise than to plague us; and instead of *Bread* prove our Poyson. And therefore are we instructed to petition for all worldly Enjoyments, under the Notion of *Bread*, which is the *Staff of Life*, and accordingly is called *the Staff of Bread*,<sup>Ps. 105. 16.</sup> implying Support and Relief in the thing we Pray for; which is not only the Possession of Earthly Comforts, but the Comfort of them, depending wholly upon the *Word of God*, Blessing them to us, whereon *Man liveth*, and *not by Bread only*.<sup>Deut. 3. 3.</sup> Without which God *may give us our Request*, and therewith *send Leanness into our Souls*: And in the *Fulness of our Sufficiency* make us to be in *Streights*.<sup>Ps. 106. 15. Job 20. 22.</sup> And as those, then, who are in Want, are to use this Petition for a Supply; so they that have an Abundance, stand in no less Need to use it for the Enjoyment. Praying hereby for the *Bread* we want, that it may be *Our's*; and praying that the *Bread*, which already is *Our's*, may do us Good, being blessed to us, coming as a Gift with the Good-Will and Kindness of the Donor. Thus waiting hereby upon God, for both the Possession and Blessing of *Our Daily-Bread*, which he alone can *Give us*. Implying, further, hereby that

2. *God bestoweth freely upon us, Whatsoever we have thereof.* We being taught to ask, not so much as *Our Daily-Bread* from him, as a Reward or Debt; all we have, even to the least crumb of *Bread*, being of Free-Gift, without our Cost, and beyond our Merit. And therefore hereby,

we are to intend our *Thankfulness* to God for all we have, or shall receive ; coming from him as an Act of *Bounty* to us. Our *Satisfaction* and *Contentment* therewith ; being not our own Choice but God's Gift ; who is Absolute in his Disposals, to Carve to us as he himself pleaseth ; and which being of *Bounty* ought to be took kindly. Our profound *Humility*, from a Sense of our own Unworthiness ; who cannot pretend so much as to deserve *Our Bread* from God, nor to be able to help our selves to it without him ; being all his *Alms-Men*, living at his Charge, and having nothing but what he *Gives*. Before God *Giveth* us Possession, our Goods are his ; and unless he *Give* them to us, they cannot be *Our's* ; and when he hath given them, they are still his ; and we are to Bless his Name, that he is pleased to *Give* them us for asking.

Thus with all Gratitude, Contentment and Humility, depending upon God for the Possession and Blessing of *Our Daily-Bread*, we are Entitled to the good Things of this Life, and pray for the Gift of *Our Daily-Bread*, as oft as we need it. Which brings us to Consider, also,

Asking is for this Day, intending Lu. 11. 3. V. Lastly, *The Limitation* of this Petition in respect of Time, restrained to the present, and suffering us only to say, *Give us [This Day] our Daily-Bread* ; Or *Day by Day*, as St. Luke Expresseth it, meaning, as the Marginal Note renders it, *Bread for the Day*. Hereby intending

To keep us Depend- ing co God. I. To keep us in a continual Dependence upon God for all our Comforts of this Life : Who every Day need his Help, and without it we are not able to procure *One Days Bread* to our selves. The Store we get to Day was wholly God's Gift, and though it be in never so great Abundance, yet

yet without his Leave and Blessing, it will prove insufficient for the Morrow. So that no Gains of one *Day* can supersede our begging fresh Supply on another; Every *Day's* Portion, depending upon every *Day's* Petition; to which we have no Right, but for the *Day* we beg it, neither any Need, but for the Exigencies of the present. And because Supplies beyond Necessity are apt to make us either vainly Profuse, or vainly Confident; therefore is God pleased to keep our Portion of these Things in his own Hands for us; which we are not to desire to have from him into our own all at once; for so the *Gentiles* seek after abundance (as our *Saviour* hath observed) who covet to Live without Dependence upon God, and are mistrustful of his Providence; But we are to trust God with the *Daily* Dispensation thereof; accounting his Bounty a sufficient Treasure, and his *Fatherly Care* for us our most certain and most comfortable Support; Casting all our Care on *him*, who is able and willing to Husband our Stock for us; to whom therefore we every *Day* resort for Recruit, not doubting his Love and Liberality to relieve us to Morrow, as he hath done to *Day*. And in such Confidence of him, and Sense of our own Dependence, we are taught *Day by Day*, to beg our *Daily-Bread*.

Matt. 6.

32.

Pet. 5.7.

2. *Hereby also, we are intended to reject all Anxious Thoughts for future Temporal Blessings*: The *Daily Bread* of this *Day* being all we are allowed to ask God to Give us thereon. To Morrow's Allowance is in God's Hands, and we are contentedly to trust him therewith, and stay for it till the Morrow doth come; and then we are to beg it as we did to *Day*; And we need not doubt but that He who maintains us to *Day*, will deal as

To free us from Anxiety.



as Bountifully with us to Morrow ; and Dispense it more to our Benefit, than if he should give us to Morrow's Provision into our Hands to Day. Therefore we are taught to *take no Thought for to Morrow* ; The Cumbrance of one Day's Provision being sufficient ; and the Morrow having Thoughts proper to it self, which are not to be Anticipated by us. We are only to beg to Day the *Bread of this Day*. And tho' God Give more, yet our Desires must run no further. And if he Give thus much, he giveth all that we can rightly Desire, or really Need ; and it may suffice till to Morrow ; and then also we may beg our *Bread* for that Day ; Not anticipating our Duty, by begging to Day, what we shall not want, and must beg again to Morrow. Therefore, further,

*To Necessitate Daily Prayer.* 3. This plainly Necessitateth our Duty of Daily Prayer : This Petition being restrained to a Day ; tho' for such Things as we have need of every Day ; whereby God hath engaged us to himself every Day ; so that we cannot pass him by one Day, without Neglect of our selves, and the Necessaries we know not how to subsist one Day, without. Our Devotion therefore of one Day, is no Excuse for our Neglect or Abatement thereof any Day. Prayer is as necessary as our *Daily Bread*, which depends upon it every Day. And which we are allowed to ask thereby but for a Day ; that so the return of our Devotion, so necessary for the security of our Innocency, may be as constant as the Day, whereon we are to renew our Request for *Our Bread*, so necessary for the support of Nature. And this, again, ought,

*To Mind us of Mortality.* 4. To mind us of the Frailty and Shortness of this present Life : The Grant of all the Comforts there-

thereof, not extending beyond the narrow Confines of one Day, we are taught to beg for no more of them at a time, because we cannot be sure of continuing to want them any longer. It is not Man that *knoweth what shall be on the Morrow*; who must wait till it come, before he can be sure it will ever come under his Care to provide for it. And therefore having no certainty of Time, no abiding Place here, but for *this Day*; we are to desire no more than the Necessaries thereof, and provide only from Hand to Mouth; One Day's Provision being all that is needful for us, that have no more to Depend on. But then,

5. Lastly, *This must Admonish of the infinitely greater Value we ought to set upon Spiritual Blessings beyond Temporal.* For *These*, we are taught, are only *Bread* convenient and sufficient for *this Day*; fit for a short and present turn; of Temporary Use, which perish with the Day, and need daily Renewal every Day: Whereas *These* are of Eternal Duration, standing us in stead all our Days here, and accompanying us hence to support and make us Happy through all Eternity hereafter. And therefore the Concerns of this Life are not what we are Principally to dwell and insist upon; which we Crave, but to have just as our present Occasions call for their Use: But our Concerns relating to the other Life, are of moment to employ our Regard to secure them not for a Day only, but for our whole Lives; which ought to run through, and mix it self with all our Actions and Purposes thereof. Not *Labouring for the Meat which perisheth, but for the Meat which endureth unto Everlasting Life.* To render us Spiritual. Jo. 6. 27.

And

And thus have we now seen both in what Proportion, and in what manner we are here taught by our Lord to pray for Temporal Blessings in this Petition. For *Bread* is *Necessary*, and we may Pray for it; *Daily Bread* is *sufficient*, and we need Covet no more; *Our Daily Bread* is *Our due*, and will not be with-held; which yet must be *Begg'd*, being God's free *Gift*; and that only *Day by Day*, for *this Day*, because of our *Dependence* on him, *Unconcernedness* for the future, *Uncertainty* of Continuance here, and more valuable *Expectations* hereafter; Therefore, we thus say, *Give us this Day our Daily Bread*; Even, O Lord,

“ Give us that continual Supply of all necessary Accommodations fit to support Life,  
 “ and to satisfy reasonable Desires, proportionable to our Personal Wants, and particular States and Conditions in this  
 “ World! And bless to us what ever thou givest hereof; That with thankful Hearts,  
 “ and contented Minds, we may ever zealously Serve; and cheerfully depend upon  
 “ the good Pleasure of thy Holy Will concerning us! Being anxiously *careful for nothing* of these sublunary perishing Comforts, *but in every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, making known*  
 “ *our Requests unto Thee, O our Heavenly* Father, *who knowest how, in Measure,*  
 “ *Kind and Season, best to give good Gifts to them that Ask*; and which we humbly now  
 “ beg in the Name and Petition of thy dear  
 “ Son Jesus our Saviour! *Amen.*

## S E R M O N XLI.

O N T H E

Fifth Petition of the LORD'S  
P R A Y E R.

Matt. vi. 12.

*And forgive Us Our Debts, As we forgive  
Our Debtors.*

**B**EGINNING to Pray for *Our Selves* in this excellent *Form*, Our Lord hath taught us, according to the *Order of Nature*, and the invincible *Law of Necessity*, to Petition first for the Preservation of our *Beings*, and to begin at the lowest Step in seeking Relief for our *Bodies*. Which having duely done in the foregoing Petition, we are from God's Kindness in lesser Things encouraged in This to ask for greater Blessings; not thinking it sufficient to have been concerned only for *Our Bodies*, without persisting in our Prayers, to recommend also the Necessities of our *Souls*. For therefore is the Particle [*And*] here added, to connect *this* to the former Petition, to declare that we are continuing those Requests which concern *Our Selves*, as not having sufficiently consulted our own Interest,  
till



till our *Souls* be provided for as well as our *Bodies*. Whose *Welfare* depending upon God's *Favour*, their principal *Necessity* is *Reconciliation* with him, obliging us therefore to beg of him the *Forgiveness* of our *Debts*, without which we can have no reason either to expect *Our Daily Bread* from him, or to hope for any *Comfort* in the having thereof. So that *Divine Mercy* is as universally *Necessary* for Man, as *Daily Bread*: And every One that liveth by *Bread* is *Necessitated*, in the strength thereof, to pray for *Mercy*; and as constantly to beg *this*, as he prays for *that*; all being not only *Natural*, but *Daily Sinners*; unworthy of the Food they eat, and *less than the least* of God's *Mercies*. And therefore to set our *Sinfulness* daily before our Eyes, which we are willing to forget; and to make us continually *Humble*, and constantly *Penitent*, to which we are so averse, and apt to *delay*; Our Lord hath obliged us, with *Our daily Bread*, every Day, to beg his *Forgiveness* of our *Debts*; and to our *Supplications* of his *Liberality*, to join those of his *Clemency*.

Gen. 13.  
10.

The Words of this Petition consist of *Two Parts*, viz. 1. *The Petition* it self, which is, That God would *forgive us our Debts*. 2. *The Terms*, upon which we are directed to make it; which is, *As we forgive our Debtors*.

The Petition is concerning.

I. *The Petition* it self, is, That God would *forgive us our Debts*. Wherein for Explanation's sake, *Four Particulars* are Distinguishable. 1. *The Subject Matter*, about which we *Petition*; which is *Debts*. 2. *The Appropriation* thereof, to whom they belong; They being [*Our*] *Debts*. 3. *The Gracious Act of Mercy* prayed for, with respect to that

that Appropriated Subject; And that is *Forgiveness*. And, 4. *The Object*, to whom this Petition is directed; which is the same, in common, of all those in this Prayer, even *Our Father which is in Heaven*.

1. *The Subject Matter about which we Petition Debts.* here, is [*Debts.*] The *Nature* whereof includes these *Four Things*. 1. Something *Lent*. 2. An *Obligation* between the Creditor and the Debtor. 3. A *Forfeiture* upon Non-payment. And, 4. A *Penalty* the Debtor is liable to thereupon. All which being between God, and every one of our selves, renders us his proper Debtors. For,

1. *There is something Lent by God to us.* Who is our Creditor for all our Enjoyments; and as such is represented by our *Saviour* in some of his *Parables*. For as *Creator*, God hath deposited with every one a certain Proportion of *Talents*, less or more, to be Traffick'd with for him, according to his own Directions; and not any One's private List and Pleasure. As *Our Law-Giver*, he hath limited our Trust therein, and made us only Stewards, and not Proprietors hereof; Reserving to himself an Interest and unalienable Dominion. And as *Our Judge*, he will exact from us an Account of our Improvements of all his Gifts, as a Debt and Service at our Hands. Whence,

2. *There is an indissoluble Obligation between God and Us.* It being but Reasonable that we should employ All for him, from whom we receive All, and give up our selves to his *Service*, who are what we are by his *Bounty*, and hope to be infinitely better through his *Mercy*. And therefore, as *St. Paul* hath observed, *We are Debtors, not to the Flesh, to live after the Flesh: Being under Pre-engagements to God, to Love, and Fear, and Trust,*

Lu. 7. 41.

Rom. 8.  
12.

*Trust*, and *Obe*y him, to *Be* and *Do* whatever he Wills us; from which nothing can free or excuse us; and which is a *Debt* that is our *Felicity* no less than *Duty* to pay him. And therefore our *Freedom* from this *Obligation* to him, is not the *Debt* we beg *Forgiveness* of from God, which is neither Possible nor for our Interest; But it is our *Violation* of this *Obligation*, forfeiting the Divine Mercy, and exposing to the Rigour of the Law, that Necessitates this begging our Pardon. For,

3. *There is, upon our Nonpayment hereof, a Forfeiture made by us to God*; So that though we before did owe our selves, and all we had to him, yet we were never till now properly his *Debtors*, being unable to account to him for our *Actions*. Whereupon,

Lu. 19. 20. Lastly, *There is a Penalty, we become immediately Obnoxious to*, from him to whom we have approved our selves Unfaithful, whose Stock we have wasted, and for his *Talent* can shew him only the *Napkin*. For the Original *Debt* we owe to God being *Obedience*, the next in case of *Default* must be *Punishment*. And he therefore that will not pay God his *Obedience*, and render back *his own with Usury*, must yield himself worthy and liable to be Executed before him for his *Disloyalty*, unless pardon'd for his *Penitency*.

By which is meant a Transgression of God's Law, or violation of that Sin. Obligation we are under to him. Wherefore; i Jo. 3. 4 St. Luke, in his account of this Prayer, calleth that Sin, which St. Matthew in this Text calleth *Debts*; because, like *Debts*, *Sin* obligeth the Guilty to suffer Condign Punishment. Which though not the Payment of *Sin* in kind, being not the Debt

*Debt* we owe the Payment of, yet it is its Pay-  
ment in value, *Sin* being the meritorious Cause  
of Punishment, the Suffering whereof every  
Transgressor oweth to Divine Justice, and which  
by a *Metonymy*, is no more Properly than *Instru-*  
*ctively* called a *Debt*, since thereby we may be  
rendred more sensible of the *Evil of our Sins*, and  
excited more fervently to pray for God's *Forgive-*  
*ness* of them. For,

1. *This aptly brings to our Mind the Burden and*  
*Perplexity of our unpardon'd Sins.* Which like un-  
cancell'd *Debts*, fills with Fears and Cares, that  
Dis-relish all Enjoyments, and brings the Curse  
of *Cain* upon Men, rendring them *Fugitives upon* Gen. 4.  
*the Earth*, driven from Place to Place, affraid of 14.  
themselves and of every one else, in continual  
Disturbance through the Expectation and Fears  
of some sudden Arrest. Infomuch, that a more  
uneasie Condition cannot be imagin'd, than a  
State of Impenitence, nor its Uneasiness more  
sensibly be express'd, than by the Name of *Debts*,  
that occasion the greatest Disturbance, and Dis-  
comfort to the Peace and Happiness of this Life.  
Especially *Sin* being the worst kind of *Debt*, as  
'tis a Transgression of the best *Law*, and lays us  
liable to the *Worst of Punishments*; and how Pro-  
sperous soever it may outwardly appear, yet  
there ordinarily is such inward secret Pangs and  
Horrors dogging it; that even in *Laughter*, the Prov. 14.  
*Heart is sorrowful* and the *Wicked* become like the 13.  
*troubled Sea*, when it cannot rest; whose *Waters* cast 14.  
*out Mire and Dirt* [even dreadful Expectations,  
and confus'd indistinct Fears, of indefinite Evils,  
arising from Guilt, that are certainly very un-  
quiet and uneasie Iamates in the Mind; where]  
*there is no Peace* saith may God to the *Wicked*. As  
Sins



Sins are *Debts*, there can be no ease; as they are *Trespases* against God, they are the Occasion of all our Evil, and suit this Name in the most rigid Degree. Which also may mind us of

2. *The Difficulty of getting disentangled from sinful Guilt, being once ensnared with the Evil thereof:* For, there is nothing accounted more intricate than *Debt*; which is most easily contracted, and most hardly acquitted; which a little *Good Husbandry* may prevent, but which the greatest *Prudence*, and most close *Frugality* are oft found little enough to get rid of. And as Sin is the worst of *Debt*, for its *Burden*, so no less for the *Difficulty* of getting clear of it. Which draws us into it by *Temptation*, with flattering Smiles and deceitful Promises; but will not be shook off without *Repentance*, without bitter Tears and painful Violence; the Uneasiness whereof is apt to make us *Loth* and *Long* in coming thereto; and keeps off some all their Life-long, yielding to perpetual Slavery, rather than undergo the Sorrow, and Pain of a violent Delivery. By this Title given to our Sins, we may be further admonished of

3. *The Enmity and Distance, thereby created between God and our selves:* Since nothing hath been a greater and more frequent occasion of Quarrels, and Disturber of Friendship in the world than Debts. Inasmuch that the Observation is common to a Proverb, That *the way to lose a Friend, is to make him your Debtor*; whose either Inability or Unwillingness to repay, will be likely, not only to wean him from his Friendship, but tempt him, at on time or other, to Envy, or to Abhor his Creditor. Nor, otherwise, doth all Sin necessarily separate between God and us; which as he

Heb. 1.  
1.

cannot behold with any Approbation or Favour

10.

towards us, so neither can we retain it with any Confidence, or Good-liking towards him. Who is always hardly thought of, and shunn'd and fear'd as an *hard Master*, by all that, through abuse of their *Talents*, become sensibly in his *Debt*. Hereby also we may take warning of,

Matt. 25.  
24.

4. *The Danger and Penalty contracted by Sin.* No Man of Consideration, accounting his Condition Happy, while incumbred with necessitated *Debts*. And therefore it is again proverbially spoken, *Out of Debt, Out of Danger*. And yet there is no comparison between the Danger of our *Debts* to Men, and those we owe to God; which till acquitted, expose to all the Miseries not only of time, but of Eternity.

With what Horror and Amazement should Sinners, hence, reflect upon their Sins, under this Notion of *Debts*! And how graciously hath our *Saviour* condescended to our Weakness and Necessity, in teaching us so to call them; to make us more apprehensive of their Burden, and Intricateness, and Enmity, and Danger, in order to excite our Caution to contract or increase, our Sorrow to bewail, and our Importunity to be pardon'd *Debts* so insupportable!

Many have the Prudence to be careful, not to owe any thing beyond their Ability to repay to Men: But, alas, how much more doth it concern us to consider, how we stand indebted to God; and, by often Examining our Accounts, and wiping off old Scores, prevent an Arrest that will exact from us the Payment of the *uttermost farthing*. For Sin is a *Debt* that we cannot avoid accounting for: We may put it off till Mat. 5.  
Death, but cannot pray it even thereby, which 26.  
is a certain Acquittance of all other *Debts*. If

while we live we sue not out *Forgiveness*, when we die we must suffer to satisfie implacable Justice for ever.

This therefore is the Evil we are here taught to deprecate, even the *Debt* of Sin ; which is the greatest of Evil, and in the Pardon whereof we are most nearly interested. For so also we are taught to acknowledge, by taking the *Debt* upon our selves, which prompts us to Consider, therefore, now,

*Which is  
our Debts.*

2. *The Appropriation thereof*, since we say [*Our*] *Debts*. For Sin being so great an Evil, and of so dangerous a Consequence, Men have ever been willing enough to hide and disown, or to excuse and extenuate their Guilt. Few being so desperately Wicked, as to be willing to be thought so. The Pleasure of Sin *tempteth*, but its Guilt naturally maketh *ashamed*. And therefore even those, who pursue that, do all they can to shun this. For which Reason our Lord seemeth so to have contrived his Prayer, that none should ask for a Pardon without owning their Fault : Obliging us all to call Sin [*Our*] *Debts*, to compleat our Repentance, and capacitate for his Pardon ; hereby admonishing that, *the best are Offenders*, and that through their *Own Fault*, and that therefore *a Confession hereof is necessary to their Forgiveness*.

1. *That all are Sinners*, can never be either question'd or forgot, since all are taught to say *Forgive us* [*Our*] *Debts*. For he who asks Pardon, confesses a Fault which standeth in need of it. And seeing this Prayer was composed for the Use of all ; and that every Day, even as oft as *Daily-Bread* is needed and asked, it followeth that all, even the best of Men, are Sinners, renewing every Day their *Trespases*, whereof they every

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ry day need *Forgiveness*. This is so necessary an Inference from this Petition, that it hath always been alledged, as one Argument to confute *Pelagianism*, asserting the Possibility of an unsinning Obedience. And it is so seasonable a Truth in its self, that only in a due Sense hereof, may God be acceptably Addressed by us. Whom it becometh to approach in our Prayers, not, as the proud *Pharisee*, doting upon conceited worthy Qualities, and good Deeds; but like the justified *Publican*, with the profoundest Humility, in a due Sense of our own Infirmities, and grievous Miscarriages; so as to be ready to acknowledge our selves, as in truth we are, Guilty of many and great Sins. Calling them [*Our*] *Debts*; by this plural Indefinite, declaring them many and hainous; committed against God and our Neighbour; not against one only, but against all his Laws; not once, but many times; and by this Particle of Appropriation; taking all the Shame and Guilt to our selves, being humbled under the Grief and Burden thereof; as knowing that though *Self-Accusation* will condemn in Human Courts, yet it is the only sure means of finding Mercy at the *Throne of Grace*. And to further this, we therefore hereby moreover acknowledge,

2. That all Sin is properly and strictly our own Fault; by our own Choice and Consent: So that as we cannot fasten the Blame any where else, so can we not excuse our selves there-from. Therefore saith St. James, *Every Man is tempted*, [so as Jam. i. 14. to contract the Debt of Guilt upon himself,] *when he is drawn away of his own Lust and enticed*. Other things may concur to allure, but 'tis only our own wicked selves that do effect the Success of Evil. For it is naturally in our Power to



resist many sorts of Temptations, by the ordinary Reasons and Considerations of Prudence and Interest; and by the Grace of God, which is profer'd and promised to every Man that will *Ask it*, which he may, if he will, and only doth not through his own Fault, we may be enabled to overcome any Temptation to Sin, that is wont ordinarily to happen; and in extraordinary Cases, extraordinary Assistance is promised by him, who knows what our Strength is, and will not  
 1 Cor. 10. 13. *suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the Temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.* And therefore, by calling Sin thus *Our own Debt*, our Saviour hath directed us where to lay the Blame, so as to be more sensible of our Need of, and more earnestly importunate for our Pardon; and by Self-Conviction he induces us to Self-Mortification, intending to capacitate us further for the same. And therefore, also, hereby it is

3. Lastly, *That Confession of our Sins is necessary to our Forgiveness* whereby we give Glory to God, and take the Shame to our selves thereof, and only become fit Objects of Divine Pity and Mercy; without which, Prayer would be Presumption; and God would be Addressed by us, not as our Creditor but our Debtor. And therefore the mention, as well as sense of our *Trespases*, is ordered here to accompany our Supplication for *Forgiveness*; not to inform God of his Debtors; or to present him with an Account of what we owe him, or have merited from him; all which he knows better than we do our selves; but to instruct and affect hereby our own Hearts, with a right knowledge of the State of *Our Debts* to him, that with *Humble, Lowly and Penitent Minds*, we may

may own our Guilt, and bewail our Danger, and to be heard for Mercy, when we Pray, *Forgive us our Debts.* The Import whereof, I proceed to explain, by considering our next Particular, viz.

3. *The gracious Act of Mercy here Prayed for,* <sup>The For-</sup>with respect to the appropriate Subject of *Our* <sup>giveness</sup>*Debts*, which is *Forgiveness*; implying a *Discharge* <sup>it needeth.</sup> of our *Personal Obligation to the Punishment due thereto.* Wherein three things are remarkable.

1. The Discharge it self. 2. The thing Discharged. And, 3. The measure and extent hereof.

1. *The Discharge it self*, here Prayed for, is *Forgiveness*; whereby our Sins discharged cease to be *Our Debt*; and the Obligation thereby to Punishment is remitted and dissolved; which the Scripture hath express'd by calling it a *Blotting* Isa. 43. out, and *not Remembering*, and *Covering*, yea, and 25. a *Casting all our Sins behind God's back*, even into Ps. 32. 1. the depth of the Sea, so as not to remain, or ever Is. 38. 17. to be found again, to assure us of the Validity of Mic. 7. 19. our Discharge, and to affect us with the abound- Jer. 50. ing Consolations thereof in God's *Forgiveness of* 20. *our Debts.*

2. *The Personal Obligation thus Discharged*, is God's Remission of the Punishment, to which the Sinner was obnoxious, whereby though the Desert of Sin, which is Intrinsic and Formal, indelibly remaineth; yet the Punishment of Sin, which is Extrinsic and Adventitious is discharged. So that the pardoned Sinner, still deserving Death, is no longer lyable thereto, but through his Faith and Interest in the Merit of Christ's Death, suffering as his Surety, his *Debt* is transferr'd, and his Person excused from Punishment deserved.

3. *The Measure and Extent hereof*, therefore reacheth to all Sufferings for Sin, whether in *this World*, or the *Other*. Inſomuch, that though we may yet after Pardon ſuffer Afflictions, yet not as the Curſe of the Law, nor for the Satisfaction of Divine Juſtice, but for the Declaration of Divine Purity and Holineſs, (to which, Sin is ſo directly contrary, that it cannot eſcape being *Chaiſtified*, even where it is *Forgiven*) and which are only Fatherly Corrections proceeding from Love and Mercy; full Satisfaction for which, having been already given by our Surety, it cannot be exacted again from us, in our own Perſons, who ſuffered, and have been acquitted in his. Indeed, the ſolemn and irreverſible Declaration of ſuch our Perſonal Diſcharge from the Punishment due to Sin, is reſerved for the Final Day of Judgment; yet, even before that, and in this Life, God Pardons Sin, Generally, in *Baptiſm*; and all particular Failings afterwards upon the Condition of our *Faith*, and *Repentance*, and hearty *Prayer* (it being inconfiſtent with the eternal Verity, Wiſdom and Purity of God to forgive Unbelievers and Impenitents.) And which likewiſe is but limited and ſuſpended upon the Terms of our *Perſeverance*, in theſe Graces. For if after our Pardon we ſhall fall off, and re-lapſe into the ſame wickedneſs, we ſhall be unpardoned again, and ſtand accountable for all former *Treſpaſſes*. For thus the *Scripture* expreſſly teacheth, That if the Righteous Man turn from his Righteouſneſs, and committeth Iniquity,-- All his Righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall not be mentioned: In his Treſpaſs that he hath Treſpaſſed, and in his Sin that he hath ſinned, in them ſhall he die. And *Mat. 18.* when that vile Debtor, in the *Gospel*, to whom

Ezek. 18.  
24.

Mat. 18.  
24.

his

his Lord had *forgiven all his great Sums*, had rendered himself unworthy of that Grace by his Merciless usage of a small *Debtor* among his *Fellow-Servants*, his incensed Lord cancell'd his Pardon, and exacted again all his forgiven *Debts*; and so, faith *Christ*, *Will my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your Hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Trespases*. From all which, then, it appears that the *Forgiveness* we expect and here Pray for, of our *Trespases*, is a full Discharge of our selves from all the *Penalty* due to Sin, whether in this Life or the other, thro' the *Satisfaction* of *Christ*, upon our being initiated at first by *Baptism* into him, and reconciled afterwards by a *continued Repentance*. Which being the Mercy pray'd for, it only now remains that we Consider,

IV. Lastly, *The Object to whom this Petition is From God directed*. Which is the same in common, with <sup>alone;</sup> all those others of this Prayer, even *Our Father* <sup>seeing</sup> *which is in Heaven*. Hereby acknowledging it, Primarily and Originally, the Prerogative of God, as to *Oblige us to Obedience*, and in Case of neglect or refusal to inflict *Punishment*; so alone to remit *this Punishment*; since as we cannot *Pardon our selves*, so neither can we *Pardon any Others*, or can *any one else Pardon us*, except only *Our Father which is in Heaven*, to whom therefore alone we pray for the *Forgiveness of our Trespases and Debts*.

1. That we cannot *Pardon our selves*, is evident, <sup>We cannot</sup> inasmuch as neither the *Obligation* nor *Forfeiture* is made to our selves, which can only be removed by whom they are made to; Nor can any thing we are able either to do here, or suffer hereafter, in the least contribute towards the removal <sup>Pardon our selves,</sup>



removal of our Guilt, by the satisfaction of Divine Justice; Since all we do of our selves is Sin, which increaseth our *Debts*; and whatsoever Good we do, is of only God's free Grace, and is but what we owe to him, even a *Debt of Duty*, which can be no payment of our other *Debts of Sin*. Wherein, if there could have been any Merit (as the *Papists* affirm there is, and we Orthodoxly deny) satisfaction by the Sufferings of the Son of God would have been needless; since Man might have bought off his own Guilt, and have quitted Scores with God at a lower Price. And though Sinners shall hereafter lie Eternally in Prison, and thereby be Eternally satisfying Divine Justice, yet what must be Eternally a making, must be eternally suffered, and can never be paid or remitted; And Human Nature that cannot undergo an infinite Degree, must suffer an infinite Duration of Punishment; an Eternity of Torments always remaining to be paid thereby. So that it being absolutely out of our own Power to effect or merit a Pardon, we are Necessitated in an humble Sense of our own Insufficiency, to address only the *Father of Mercies* for this the greatest of *Mercies*, which is the *Forgiveness of our Debts*. And,

Nor Others.

2. That we cannot Pardon any Others, more than our Selves, the same Divine Prerogative inhibiteth; Placing it beyond our reach to meddle with those *Debts* Men stand obliged in to God, though making it a Duty to forgive our Debtors, who trespass against us. And, since every such *Debt to Man* is also a *Trespass against God*, (inasmuch as his Law is Violated, whenever another's Right is injured) therefore can we forgive only so far forth as the Wrong affects our selves, with-

out

out presuming to remit the Wrong done to God, which only his Mercy and the Offender's Penitence can be able to Cancel. And,

3. *No One else can forgive such Debts but God, Nor can any Other* though highly pretended to by Some, and rightly *Pardon Us.* delegated to Others, yet God hath Declared, and claimed this to be his sole Prerogative. The Pope of Rome presumeth to pardon Sins *Authoritatively* and *Judicially*, which is God's Peculiar; And hereby manifests himself to be the *Antichrist*, ex-<sup>2 Thes. 2.</sup> *alting himself above all that is called God*, not in Earth only, but also in Heaven. For while he vends Pardons for Sins past, and Indulgences for the Sins of many Years to come; what doth he but presume to controul the Authority of God, and exalt his own Power and Pleasure above it? But this is a Damnable Insolence, which we are taught justly to Condemn: And which the *Absolution of Sins* by Men in our Church is no way Chargeable with; being only *Ministerially Declared*, by a Power delegated from God, whereby his Pleasure and Prerogative is proclaimed to Pardon all that will accept of it upon the Terms it is offered; And *whose Sins Christ's Ministers* thus Authorized by him, declare, That God hath *remitted, they only are* (being according to his <sup>Jo. 20. 23.</sup> Promise, and not contrary to his Pleasure) certainly *remitted*. So that however the Power of *Forgiving Sins* is pretended to by, or entrusted with Men, yet can it only belong to God, whose Prerogative it is; distinguishing him from all other Beings; wherein he seemeth to Triumph, by his Prophet, when he saith, *I, even I am he* <sup>Isa. 43. 25.</sup> *that blottereth out Transgressions*. Whereof he hath forc'd Acknowledgments even from *Scribes and Pharisees*, <sup>Mar. 2. 7.</sup> that *None can forgive Sins but God alone*. There-

Therefore, we can neither Forgive our selves, nor any other, nor can any other forgive us our Sins, as God doth, and as we pray for him to do it for us. Which here is fitly thus suggested to us, for encouragement of our Devotion in offering up this *Petition* to him. Whereby we may not only hope to succeed; begging no other Relief than what there is Power and Kindness to give, but to receive even beyond what we dare to Expect, or can possibly Need. Seeing whatsoever God doth, he doth it *Freely*, for his own Sake, without respect to any former Desert, or expectation of any future Recompence; and being his Mercy is without limit, dispensing our Pardon in *Full*, without Reserve or Mistake. There is therefore no room left (as some invent) to make *Merchandise*, or to establish a *Purgatory* upon this Doctrine of *Forgiveness of Sins* in the Church of *Christ*.

As therefore it is a Mercy, to be ever thankfully acknowledg'd by us all, that *there is Forgiveness*, to be had for all our *Debts*; so that this *is with God*, Dispensed only by himself, *Freely* and *Fully*, not depending on our *Merit*, nor failing our *Expectation*. And this is what it concerneth all speedily and eagerly to lay hold on, and stick by, as the only Plank left us to escape on, with our Lives, out of the fatal Shipwrack of our Innocency by Sin; involving all in Danger, and leaving but this one way to escape the same to every one. For All have *Debts* charg'd against them; which none are chargeable with *but themselves*; and which nothing can wipe out but *Forgiveness* to be had *only from God*, thro' the Merit and Satisfaction of his Son, upon our own *Faith* and *Repentance*. And therefore to God, ascribing

ascribing the Honour of his *Justice*, and the Glory of his *Mercy* towards us herein; to whom, tho' *Damnation* is our due, yet *Forgiveness* is our Privilege in an humble Sense of our *Need*, and sincere Acknowledgment of our *Deserts*, we hereby beg a Free and Full Discharge and Reconciliation from him. *Desiring* to live in *Peace* and *Obedience* with God here, that we may be admitted, through *Christ* our Head, to Reign with him in *Glory* hereafter. Such is the *Import* and *Improvement* of this *Petition*, whereby we ask God to *Forgive us our Trespases*. Proceed we to Consider now,

II. *The Terms upon which we are directed to make The Terms it. Which is the other Part the Text and Petition of Forgiveness.* were distinguish'd into; and is, *As we forgive our Debtors*. Concerning which these Four Inquiries oblige our Regard, viz. 1. Who are our *Debtors* to be *Forgiven*. 2. What that *Forgiveness* is we are required to give them. 3. The Proportion or Resemblance between our *Forgiveness* of our *Debtors*, and God's *Forgiving Us our Debts*. And, 4. The Dependence and Relation that is between these; being obliged to say, *Forgive Us our Debts, as we forgive Our Debtors*.

1. *Our Debtors*, then, needing our *Forgiveness*, *Who is our* are such as have *Trespassed against us*; even as we *Debtor*. by *Trespassing against God* are made *Debtors* to him. For as all Men are *Debtors to God*, so may one Man become a *Debtor* to another. The same God that hath obliged us to Duty towards himself, having also obliged all Men to Duty towards one another. And accordingly as the Original *Debt* we owe to God, is *Obedience*; so the Original *Debt* we owe to one another is universal Love and Charity. And as in failure of the first, we become



Rom. 13.  
9.

become *Debtors* to God, so in failure of the latter, *we Trespass against*, and become *Debtors* to one another also. Whence it followeth, That though all Men are our *Debtors*, yet all Men may not stand in need of our *Forgiveness*; Because as *All owe* the Duty of *Love*; so can there be no Discharge from this *Debt*. And, therefore such only as have failed in the payment of this Original Debt, and have thereby incurr'd a further Debt of Satisfaction for the Wrong done, are upon this new Score our *Debtors*, that need our Mercy. For, though the Obligation to *Love one another* be laid upon all by God, and a failure herein doth consequently Indebt us to his Divine Justice for the Violation of his Law; Yet, since Man also suffereth hereby, in being defrauded of what God hath given him a Right to, this no less Indebteth to Man, and both Creditors are to be satisfied. So that by this one single Offence, a double *Debt* is contracted, *viz.* Of Disobedience to God, and of Injustice to Man; the first to be paid by the Satisfaction of *Christ's* Righteousness through our Faith and Repentance; the latter by our Acknowledgment, Reparation and Restitution; without which there can be no Discharge from either. For Satisfaction to Man is a necessary part of that Repentance required towards our satisfying God. For he that truly Repents, doth from his Heart wish that the Wrong had never been done. And therefore will be sure to do his utmost to annihilate the Fault, by giving the Abused Party a Compensation. And till this is done, the Injurious is a *Debtor* both to God and Man. And therefore our *Debtors* are the Uncharitable and Injurious, who having withheld or took from us the Love and Justice due to us, owe

us

us Satisfaction for their *Trespas against us*, be it in whatever Respect, whether of Person, Reputation or Estate, which till they have paid, they stand indispensibly Indebted to us for, and need our Mercy and *Forgiveness*.

2. *The Forgiveness, therefore, we are required to* How we give such our Debtors, is not a Refusal of their must For- Satisfaction, and Reparation of their Breach of give. Charity and Justice, when either offered or recoverable; But only a *Remission* to them of the Penalty their *Trespas* deserved. For, the *Forgiveness* here supposed to be in our Power, and recommended as both the Condition of our begging *Forgiveness* of God, and an Inticement to the Obtaining of it from him, is evidently Analogous with that which is the Prerogative of God, and which we beg from him, being expressed by the same Word, and made the Condition thereof. And, therefore, as when God *Forgiveth*, he freeth from the Punishment due to our *Trespas*ses, so when we *Forgive* them that *Trespas against us*, it is only required that we also, in like manner, mercifully forbear and treat our Debtors, not *rending Evil for Evil*, but *doing good to them that* Rom. 12. Despitely use us. So that our *Forgiveness* of Others consists in these Two Things, *viz.* Mat. 5. 44. A total forbearance from all outward Acts of Private and Personal Revenging of *Trespas*ses done us. And an inward Disposition of Charity and Good Will towards the Person: of them that do them.

1. *Personal Revenge* is absolutely inconsistent By For- with *Forgiveness*; being prohibited us, whether bearance. by Word or Deed, who are taught to be *Pitiful* and *Courteous*, not *rending Evil for Evil*, not *Rail-* 1 Pet. 3. 9. *ing for Railing*, but *contrariwise Blessing*, knowing that we are thereunto called, that we should inherit

Rom. 12. *a Blessing. And Vengeance is mine, I will repay*  
 19. *saith the Lord.* And though, therefore, our Debtors owe us Satisfaction, yet we owe them the *Forgiveness* of *Revenge*; being not allowed to exact Satisfaction, or take Punishment on them *our Selves*, or out of any ill Will to retaliate the Injury on them. For *Vengeance is God's*; and 'tis his Prerogative to exact the Payment of all Injuries done us; who hath not trusted the Righting of our Selves in our own Hands, (as an unreasonable Thing to be both Judge and Executioner in our own Concern, and knowing how Partial we should be) but himself hath undertook to do this for us, and to him we must *commit our Selves*, that ever *Judgeth Righteously*, as to the *Revenging* part. Which yet doth not Necessitate us to sit still, and by a stupid Patience invite Injuries; but only obliges us not to seek *Revenge* in our Redress, nor to intend therein our *Debtor's Punishment*, rather than our own Right and Security. For, as *Vengeance* belongeth to God; so *Self-defence* is a principle of Nature entrusted with us, and may be prosecuted and maintain'd against the *Trespasses* we *Forgive*. God hath delegated the Right of Punishing to the Magistracy, for the Injured to appeal to; without which there would be no Living, and Human Society could never endure. And therefore where the Wrong done is of Moment, and the *Trespasser* remains Obstinate, and all other Means have failed to prevail with him to do us Right, and Connivance may do more Harm. and we have Justice on our side, and retain Charity in our Hearts; there can be no manner of Doubt but while we do bring the Offender to condign Punishment, we do forbear *Revenge*, and so far *forgive* him his *Trespass* against us. And to this  
 Notion

1 Pet. 2.  
 23.

Notion of our *Forgiveness*, may be accommodated that of Our *Saviour's*, obliging us to suffer him that *sues us at the Law, and taketh away our Coat, to have our Cloak also*; because instancing only in trivial Matters, where Redress would hardly be sought for, but for the sake of some *Revenge*, which are better pass'd by and suffered twice, than contended about once by us. Therefore, thus far, it is clear that we must *Forgive them that Trespass against us*, so as to forbear Punishing them our selves at all, or endeavouring to have them Punished by any other, out of Ill-will or Desire of Mischief to them. And therefore,

Mat. 5.  
40.

2. *An inward Disposition of Charity and Good Will* By Benevolence towards the Person of our Debtor, is absolutely Necessary to be retained, even in those Cases wherein we are allowed to justify our own Right against them. The Want of this will make us *Debtors*, and to need *Forgiveness* from them which they needed from us; Being all commanded to *Love our Enemies*, without which our Forbearance to execute *Revenge* is not sufficient *Forgiveness*, and to *bless them that Curse us, &c.* So that the *Forgiveness* due from us to all our *Debtors*, is thus a forbearance of *Revenge*, and the Exercise of all *Charity* towards them. Nor is it every Slight and feigned Degree hereof that will serve our turn; since, in the Petition, mention is made of

---5. 44.

3. *The Proportion or Resemblance between our Forgiveness of our Debtors, and God's Forgiving us our Debts.* For so the Particle [*As*] seemeth to include something of Parity and Similitude in it; Directing us in the manner of our *Forgiving*, being duely applied only to the Duty, without referring to the Persons *Forgiving*. Hereby Understanding, not that we *Forgive as God doth*, which

As God  
forgives  
Us, even



is impossible; nor that *God does Forgive as we do*, which would be altogether Unprofitable; But that, though we cannot raise our *Forgiveness* to so high a Pitch as to equal God's, yet that we make his *Forgiving us our Trespasses* the Rule and Pattern of our *Forgiving them that Trespass against us*; and particularly in these Three Instances, in imitation of the *Sincerity*, the *Freeness* and *Fulness* thereof. For,

*Sincerely.* 1. *God's Forgiveness is sincere*; without the least remains of Malice or Prejudice. Not Verbal and Outward only, but Unfeigned and Cordial. Wherefore *Christ* threatning the Implacable, with the Doom of that *Wicked Servant*, who had no Mercy for his *Debtor*, insisteth wholly upon the Sincerity of our *Forgiving one another our Trespasses*, as only available for God's *Forgiving us*;

Mat. 18. 35. For, *so likewise*, saith he, *shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your Hearts Forgive not every one his Brother their Trespasses*. And further, to secure this, he, elsewhere, obligeth his Disciples to *Pray for them that Dispitefully use them*, and to intercede with God for their *Forgiveness*, before whom it is both Impious and dangerous to Dissemble, and from whom no Mercy can be expected for themselves, who with feigned Lips beg it of him for others.

*Freely.* 2. *God's Forgiveness again, is Voluntary and Free*, without either Motive or Rcompence. And the more easily and freely we extend our Mercy, the more Divine will it be; not insisting upon Satisfaction for every trivial Offence; and being soon appeas'd, and willing to be reconciled after any *Forgiveness* that comes hardly, and requires many Motives and submissions, being Mercenary and Cruel, and very different from that of God's,

3. *Whose*

3. *Whose Forgiveness, Finally, is Full and Com-Fully:*  
 pleat; excepting no Crimes, nor reserving any  
 Ill-Will; being open for all Sinners, and for all  
 Transgressions; freeing from all Stain of Guilt,  
 and Fear of Punishment. And therefore are we  
 to *forgive them that Trespass against us*, Indefinite-  
 ly, without any Exception or Limitation of ei-  
 ther their Persons or Crimes. Being reconcilable  
 after great *Trespases*, as well as small ones;  
 since the greatest from Man are but little to *Our's*  
 against God; and repeating our *Forgiveness*, as  
 oft as Injuries are repeated against us, though  
 even *Seven times a Day*, or amounting to *Seventy*  
*times Seven*; no Continuation, or Repetition of  
*Trespases* being able to weary out, or exceed that  
*Forgiveness* which is Divine.

This is the Divine Proportion and Manner,  
 wherein we are required to *forgive our Debtors*;  
 which seeming to be the *Condition* as well as *Copy*  
 of Mercy, it yet remains that we Consider also,

4. Lastly, *The Dependance and Relation here be-* *A Relati-*  
*ween God's forgiving us our Trespases, and our for-* *on be-*  
*giving them that trespass against us.* For so also *tween*  
 this Particle [*As*] being a Connexion between *God's For-*  
 our *Duty* and *Privilege*, seemeth to intend, that *giving*  
 they should mutually influence each other; God's *and Our's;*  
*Forgiveness* preceding to encourage our's, and *inasmuch*  
 our's immediately following to obtain and secure  
 his; God therefore *Forgiving us our Debts*, that  
 we may *Forgive our Debtors*: And we therefore  
*Forgiving our Debtors*, that God may *forgive us our* *Our Desire*  
*Debts.* For, *of For-*

1. *What a mighty Motive is our asking Forgiveness*  
*from God, for us to Forgive them that have from God;*  
*trespassed against us?* For God, against whom we *a Motive*  
 have *trespassed*, is infinitely our Superiour; and *for us to*  
*forgive*  
*as Others.*

as there can be no comparison between the distance wherein he is above us, and that we stand in to the vilest of our *Debtors*, so are our *Debts* to him infinitely more hainous, and more numerous; which yet at our Intreaty, upon the most reasonable Terms, he freely and fully Pardons, even to *Us*, the most Rebellious and Undeserving, whom he had intirely in his Power, and might have gotten himself a great Renown, as certainly by Glorifying his Vengeance, in our everlasting Destruction, as his Mercy in our eternal Redemption. And should not we, then, *Worms and no Men, forgive our Fellow-Servant?* One of the same Mould, and Materials with our selves; whom our own Indiscretion, or his mistake and weakness might, possibly, make *our Debtor*; whose *Forgiveness* we our selves may shortly have the same Need of; to whom, perhaps, we are no way Superiour; who, it may be, hereafter may much more benefit us with his Friendship; in the present Peace and Agreement with whom, we cannot fail to find much Comfort and Good, however, to our selves; and whose Offences against us, are, alas, but as *Pence*; whereas our's against God are as *Talents*, and vastly disproportionable, both in Nature and Number. And can we refuse *Forgiveness* to one another, who all stand in so much more Need of, and experience so much more Mercy in the *Forgiveness* of God? Such is the powerful influence of God's *forgiving us our Debts*, to engage us likewise to forgive *our Debtors*. So that be the Practice never so Difficult, yet it cannot be denied to be very reasonable: Nor can it thwart corrupted Nature, more than it agrees with unprejudiced Judgment. In like manner, again,

2. *What*

Pf. 22. 6.  
Matt. 18.  
32.

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2: *What a great Encouragement is our Forgiving Our For-*  
*them that trespass against us, for us to beg and hope* giving o-  
*for the Forgiveness of our Trespases against God?* thers, an  
 For the one hath such a Dependence upon the Encou-  
 other, that as without this, God will never grant to desire  
 that; so have we no Warrant to desire it. Not Forgive-  
 that there can be any Merit in our Mercifulness ness from  
 to one another, to deserve the Mercy of God to God.  
 wards us, or to make him our Debtor thereby;  
 but such is the Good Pleasure of God to make his  
 Forgiveness of us the Reward of our Forgiving one  
 another; and to make this the Condition of ob-  
 taining that. Therefore with the merciful, God Pl. 18. 25.  
 hath engaged, that he will shew himself Merciful.  
 And that the Merciful shall obtain Mercy. And Mat. 5. 7.  
 therefore, St. Matthew's Particle of Assimilation,  
 [As,] is by St. Luke turn'd into the Causal [For,] Lu. 11. 4.  
 expressing in this Petition, the form of a Profes-  
 sion of our present Forgiving all our Debtors, as a  
 Declaration of our not desiring the Pardon of  
 God upon any other Terms: Begging it only on  
 this Score, and believing that it is no otherwise  
 to be obtained. For, immediately after the reci-  
 tal of this Prayer, our Saviour also addeth, that  
 if we forgive Men their Trespases, Our Heavenly Fa-  
 ther will also forgive us: But if we forgive not Men Mat. 6.  
 their Trespases, that neither will our Father for- 14. 15.  
 give us our Trespases. So that our Forgiveness of  
 others is so far pre-required to the Pardon we beg  
 of God, that we cannot either beg, or expect the  
 latter, without our bringing the former with us,  
 either in the Act or Purpose of it. If then we  
 do not duely perform this, however hardly we  
 may think of it, every time that we put up this  
 Petition to God, we do in Effect beg of God not  
 to Forgive us; hereby turning our Prayer not on-



ly into Sin, but into a Curse and terrible Imprecation against our selves. As therefore our Dealings are one with another, so may we expect to be dealt with by God: And as God deals with us, so is it but reasonable that we should deal one by another. And because we are so apt to remember our own Needs, and forget our Duty; to Pray for Good things to our selves, and neglect the doing them to others, therefore our Lord hath thus mercifully annexed one of the greatest Duties of the *Gospel*, so inseparably to the greatest Necessity of Nature, that we cannot ask God to *Forgive* us, but we must at the same time be in actual Friendship and Charity with one another; *Luk. 2. 14.* establishing hereby *Peace on Earth, and Good-Will towards Men*, in our Reconciliation with Heaven, *to the Glory of God in the highest.*

*Heb. 12. 14.* This therefore, it concerneth us all, *as much, as in us lieth, to follow with all Men*; it being what all our Hopes of Mercy and *Forgiveness* from God doth depend upon; begging Fervently for Grace to enable us in the Practice of this most difficult and excellent Duty; and then

‘ O Thou, Our Father which art in Heaven!  
 ‘ Whose Prerogative, and Inclination it is  
 ‘ to *Forgive* Iniquity, Transgression and  
 ‘ Sin, being a God able and ready to *Pardon*;  
 ‘ Gracious and Merciful! Be thou gracious  
 ‘ and merciful to us, grievous and  
 ‘ daily Sinners against thy Divine Majesty,  
 ‘ humbly Prostrate with Shame and Sorrow,  
 ‘ loathing our Guilt, bewailing our Misery,  
 ‘ and Crying for Mercy, and undone by  
 ‘ our *Debts*, here before thee! Release us,  
 ‘ O Lord, from the Burden and Difficulties,  
 ‘ the

‘ the Enmity and Danger wherewith we are  
‘ oppressed hereby ! Discharge us freely and  
‘ fully, upon our continued Faith and Re-  
‘ pentance ; and restore us graciously to thy  
‘ Favour ; through the Satisfaction of Christ ;  
‘ that henceforth living in Peace, and Obe-  
‘ dience with thee here, we may, through  
‘ him our Head, be admitted to Reign with  
‘ thee in Glory hereafter !

‘ And Grant, O Lord, that we may never for-  
‘ feit this Pardon of thine, by denying our’s  
‘ to our Brethren ; but may sincerely, free-  
‘ ly and fully *Forgive*, that we may be the  
‘ more surely, *As* we are the more obliging-  
‘ ly, *Forgiven* ; delighting to shew Mercy,  
‘ who stand in so much greater Need of it,  
‘ and Experience so much more Benefit by  
‘ having it shewed to us ; and not doubting  
‘ to find Mercy from thee, *the Father of Mer-*  
‘ *cies*, if we, from our Hearts, upon thy  
‘ Command, and after thy Example, *For-*  
‘ *give one another*. Grant this, therefore, O  
‘ Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ his  
‘ Sake ! *Amen*.

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# SERMON XLII.

## ON THE

### Sixth Petition of the LORD's P R A Y E R.

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Matth. vi. 13.

*And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us  
from Evil.*

**A**FTER our praying for the *Forgiveness* of our *Trespases*, we are most fitly directed next to Pray, that God would *not lead us into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.* For if the *Former* of these Petitions were real, and proceeded from a due Sense of the *hainous Nature* and dangerous *Consequents* of the *Sins* we desired a Pardon for, this *Latter* cannot but seem seasonably necessary, and make us desire importunately never to fall again into the like desperate *Circumstances*; that being made whole we may sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto us. For Relapses are always most dangerous and Fatal. As new Wounds received upon old Scars are most difficult to be healed. And if God follow us not with his restraining and preventing Grace, as well as free us by his pardoning Mercy,

Jo. 5. 14.

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cy, *Forgiveness* will but little Profit us, which we shall so quickly forfeit by our renewed *Trespasses*. And therefore, that Divine Grace in forgiving *past Faults* may not be in vain, it becomes our necessary Duty to pray also against our falling into *Future Sins*; and accordingly we are here taught by our *Saviour* to subjoyn this Request, *And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil*, being the Sixth and last Petition of this Divine Prayer; express'd, 1. *Negatively*; *And lead us not, &c.* and, 2. *Affirmatively*; *But deliver us from Evil*. Which some, indeed, con-  
But one  
Petition.  
tend to be *two* distinct Petitions, whereby they reckon *Seven* in this Prayer. Which, whether they be or no, is not material; nor can the Prayer borrow any Vertue from the Number, nor the number derive any Mystery to the Prayer. It is, however, observed that in the vulgar *Latin* Edition in *St. Luke*, this latter part of the Petition [ viz. *But deliver us from Evil* ] is wanting, which at this day is extant in all the *Greek* Copies, and in the *Syriack* Edition. Although it may be more than probable, that in the time of the old Interpreters, there were some *Greek* Copies which had it not. And therefore the divers reading, and the defect of this part in *St. Luke* is a probable Confirmation that there is nothing contained in this last part of the Petition, which was not virtually in the former; and that it is no distinct Petition from; but rather an Explanation, with some Improvement of it; affording Light whereby we may discover more exactly what it is we desire when we Pray, *Not to be led into Temptation*. For then do we escape the *Temptation*, when we are freed not only from it, but from the Prevalency and *Evil* of it. So that  
this



this *Delivery from Evil* which we supplicate, is but the contrary to being *Led into Temptation* which we deprecate. For the Particle [*But*] being a note of Opposition, connecteth here, and restraineth the Sense to one and the same thing, without which the Opposition would be null; and which is here nothing else but *Temptation* as an *Evil*. And therefore the intire Import of the Petition agrees and unites in this one Request. viz. 'That, seeing tho' God often *forgives us our* ' *Trespases*, yet we are apt continually, through ' *Temptations*, to *Trespas* again, God would be ' pleased either to keep us from such *Temptations* ' as endanger us hereto, or preserve and support ' us, that we be not overcome by them, and receive *Evil* from them. To illustrate this the following Particulars require our Notice.

- I. What is meant by *Temptation*.
  - II. What, *Not to be led into it*.
  - III. How God may be supposed to *lead thereinto*.
  - IV. Why he, who can hinder it, doth yet *lead us* so into it.
  - V. What the *Evil* is we herein beg Deliverance from.
  - VI. What also that *Deliverance*, is, and how wrought for us.
- And, Lastly, The necessity we lie under of Supplicating such *Deliverance*, from *Our Father which is in Heaven*.

What is  
Temptation.

I. Consider we, *What is meant by Temptation*, Which, according to the proper Signification of the Word, is no other than a *Tryal*, which yet, according to the Design and Intent thereof, is either *Exploratory* or *Suasory*; the *First* only for *Discovery*,

covery, and is therefore in its self, for the most part, *Innocent* and *Good*; the *Latter* for *Enticement*, and is commonly *Pernicious* and *Bad*. And in one of these two Senses, is the word to be ever understood, however applied. For tho' here it is applied only to God, yet are there other *Temp-ers* besides him, whose *leading us* is no less to be deprecated. For there are *Temptations* into which *One Man leadeth another*; or whereby *a Man tempteth himself*; or wherewith we may be said to *tempt God*, or *God is said to tempt us*; or finally, wherewith the *Devil tempteth*. Whence we come to be surrounded with variety of *Temptations* in this mortal State; some to *Prove*, and some to *Ensnare* us; but all to be *Deprecated*, forasmuch as any may in the Event, become a means of our falling into Sin.

1. *One Man leadeth another into Temptation.* *Men tempt one another.*  
 And this either for *Discovery* or *Enticement*; upon a *Faultless*, or upon a very *wicked Design*. For thus for *Discovery* of one anothers Vertues and Vices, to admire and imitate the one, to shame and shun the other, it may be not only *Innocent*, but commendable and necessary to make Trial by some probable means how each other stand endowed and affected. Thus the *Queen of Sheba* tempted or proved the *Wisdom* of King *Solomon* with her *hard Questions*. And for this the Church of *Ephesus* is commended, having *tryed them*, which said they were *Apostles*, and were not, *and had found them Lyars*. But to tempt one another with an evil Design, either by *Suasion* to that which is Sin, or by *Ensnaring* any one unawares into a Danger, is, though but too frequent, yet a *Devilish Practice*. And thus the *Whorish Woman* is by *Solomon* represented tempting the *young* Prov. 7. 7.

Lu. 20. *young Fool*; and the subtle *Pharisees* by St. *Luke*,  
23. designing upon our Blessed *Saviour*, and from all  
Temptations of this kind, it concerns us to pray  
for Preservation or Deliverance. But,

2. *Men are but too prone to be their own Tempters.*  
Men their Which yet also is not only blameless, but Praise  
own worthy, when it is for Trial of the Heart to dis-  
Tempters. cover the Graces and Corruptions thereof; be-  
ing what Necessity and Religion hath made a  
Duty, and is expressly enjoyn'd by St. *Paul*, com-  
manding to *Examine your selves whether ye be in*  
*the Faith, prove your own selves*: But, what Men  
2 Cor. 13. are more prone to, is a sinful tempting of them-  
5. selves, whereof they become Guilty; when,

1. *They voluntarily run themselves upon the Oc-*  
*casions of Sin*; and even tempt Temptations,  
by either presuming upon their own Strength,  
or strengthening the Assault against themselves;  
not only tamely suffering their own Lusts to en-  
Rom. 13. snare them, but making Provision for the *Flesh* to  
14. fulfil the Lusts thereof. Or when,

2. *They easily yield for any small advantage*; and  
Sin, tho' not without some, yet upon never so  
slight a Temptation, not falling by any Power  
herein, but only by the Obstinacy of their Will,  
being bent to comply upon any Terms. Or even  
when,

3. Lastly, *They suffer themselves to be seduced to*  
*sin, to their apparent Prejudice and Loss*, at Present,  
of Reputation and Health, and Wealth, and Content,  
and Life it self, (many Sins, we know, not being  
to be purchased at any other rate) and Hereafter  
they incur the Loss of *Eternal Felicity*, which is  
the Wages of all Sin. And he that Sins upon such  
terms and in such manner, must be supposed to  
be only his own Tempter, being captive to his  
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own Lusts; from the Temptations and Thralldom whereof, to be kept and rescued by the Power of God's Grace, is a Mercy all need and are bound to Pray for.

3. *Men, also, are said to tempt God*, which the *God is* *Scriptures* often mention, and God himself complains of. Which yet must be understood only *tempted.* *Exod. 17.* *Figuratively*, without supposing any new Motion *2.* *or Inclination to be wrought in the Divine Will,* *Numb.* *14. 22.* in Condescension to our Capacities, and in reference to the Effects of it: And which, though it can be only *Exploratory* of his Providence or Patience, yet is it always sinful, because *Presumptuous.* *God, indeed, St. James tells us, cannot be tempted* *Jam. 1. 13.* *to Evil*; but his Providence or Patience being presumptuously tryed and provoked, by urging him, either unnecessarily to work Miracles, or unreasonably to forego his Patience, his Divinity is tempted. And therefore, in the *First* Sense, our Saviour applyed that Reprimand to the Devil *tempting him to cast himself down head-long* *Mat. 4. 7.* *from a Pinnacle of the Temple, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*: and, in the *Second*, is the *Israelites Provocation in the Wilderness*, called, by the *Psalmist*, the *Day of Temptation*, hereby God being tempted to Wrath and Vengeance against them. Both which sorts of *Temptations*, also, *Du-* *Psal. 95:* *8.* *ty and Interest prompt us to deprecate.*

4. *God is said, too, to tempt Men.* Which yet must be understood only by way of *Probation*; as *God tempt-* *eth.* *Jam. 1. 13.* the Author of all our Trials, but of none of our *Sins.* For though all Temptations to Evil are by the Permission of God, yet he thereby *tempteth* *no Man* to inveigle him into Sin, and with a desire he should do wickedly; (which is contradictory both to the Nature of Sin, and Justice of its



its Punishment,) suffering this, without any Disparagement to his Providence, either *in Mercy* to make Men better, and thereby to prepare them for a greater Reward ; which is the happy end and issue of *Temptations*, to those who are not wanting to themselves ; either by proportioning the Temptation to their Strength, or if it exceed *that*, by ministring new Strength, and Support by the secret, and extraordinary Aids of God's Holy Spirit. Or, *in Judgment*, God may permit wicked Men to be assaulted by Temptations to Sin, withdrawing the Assistances of his Grace from them, and leaving them to their own Weakness and Folly, for their former Obstinacy and Impiety, whereby, they have justly deserved to be so dealt withal. In the *Former* way God tempt-

Gen. 22. *ed Abraham*, and *Hezekiah*, and every good Man  
1. whom he hath suffered to *fall into divers Temptations* ; and in the *Latter* God suffered *Pharaoh's*  
2 Chr. 32. *heart to be hardened*, and gave up the Idolatrous  
31. Heathen to *Uncleanness*, and to a *reprobate Mind*.  
Exod. 7. And which *Temptations* are therefore to be depre-  
13. cated by us, so far as we have merited any Evil  
Rom. 1. from God ; that however they *Correct*, they may  
28. never *Punish* our Sins. But,

*The Devil tempteth.* 5. Lastly, *The Devil tempteth Men*, always with a Design to seduce and ensnare by all possible Arguments, and Motives to the Commission of Sin ; never to prove and try us for Good, but to entrap us for mischief, that he may have advantage to accuse us of, and hereafter to torment us for it. And this is so purely the Business of the Devil, that he is hence called *the Tempter* ; who first  
1 Thes. 3. began the Work, and hath continued it ever  
5. since by a continued Propagation. It being *He* that propoundeth the tempting *Object* without,  
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and doth Influence and excite our own *Lusts* within. So that some Sins may be wholly of his Injection, and are no further *Our's*, than they are entertain'd and consented unto by us; and those which are the proper Conception of our own Lusts, are usually enforced by him, who hath both Skill and Malice enough to take the Advantage both of our Weakness and Corruption. <sup>1 Jo. 3. 8.</sup>  
Upon which account Sin is called *his Work*, and <sup>10.</sup>  
Sinners *his Children*, and he said to go about, <sup>1 Pet. 5. 8.</sup>  
*seeking whom he may devour*, through his Hatred to God, and Envy to Man; and whose Power we cannot be too solicitous to be protected or delivered from.

Such then being the *Temptations*, so differenced by the several Tempters which offer them, to which we are exposed, and desire *not to be led into*; Consider we now,

II. *What it is not to be led into Temptation.* Which *What not*  
importing a judicial Act, of carrying us within *to be led*  
the reach and assault thereof, for Correction or <sup>into</sup> Punishment, prompts us to desire hereby these *Temptation.*  
two things; viz. *Preservation from the Occasion of Sin*,  
and *Protection from the Power of such Occasions*; that  
we may be kept either from the *Conflict*, or at  
least from the *Conquest* of all Temptations. Both  
which Senses the Expression is capable of, and  
good Reason recommends as a proper Subject for  
our Prayers.

I, By Praying, therefore *not to be led into Temptation*, *Not to be*  
we Pray for *Preservation from the Occasions* *Tempted.*  
*of Sin*. It being a Mercy even not to be tempted;  
and the best Security against Sin, is to be kept  
out of the Way of Temptation.

And therefore, before we beg *Deliverance from*  
*Evil*, we pray that, if it may so seem good to  
God,

God, we may rather be preserved from needing Deliverance; and be saved from the *Guilt* by escaping the *Occasion* of Sin. But then this we pray for with Submission, with a limited and restrained meaning; not *Absolutely* desiring never to be Tempted at all; because *to be tempted* is not only no Sin in its self; but a necessary method of Providence, and conducive to the Glory of God's Grace, which is magnified more in supporting amidst Temptations, and our improving thereby, than it would be in a perfect Exemption therefrom. But yet with *Submission, and Conditionally*, we may and ought to pray that God would, if he thinks fit, rather spare us, and especially from such Temptations, as are most Potent and Formidable; bordering upon Sin, and leading thereto, and sometimes commencing therewith, and being no excuse to our Guilt; which therefore, all have great Reason to be jealous of and dread, though none may refuse to be exercised thereby. But then, further,

Not to be overcome by Temptation.

2. By Praying *not to be lead into Temptation*, we pray for *Preservation from the Conquests of Temptations to Sin*; and this, so far as the present Infirmary of human Nature will permit, we may pray for absolutely and universally, so as never to be damnably overcome and captivated by any *Temptation* of whatever kind, however designed, or from whomsoever it may come. Which, being so frequently the Event of being *Tempted*, is usually meant hereby, and is the Principal Sense intended in this part of the Petition, implying these four things.

1. That God would afford us Assistance to support us, under the Conflict of such Temptations as we cannot avoid. Because Resistance being necessary to prevent

prevent our being overcome; and of our selves we being insufficient in that manner to resist, we must be hereby supposed to invoke Help for our Security needful to oppose the Temptation against which we pray.

2. That such our Assistance may be suitable and sufficient to our Necessity for support and safety; either by proportioning our Temptation to that measure of Grace God shall bestow upon us, or by giving us such a measure of Grace as is answerable to the force of the Temptation to be encountered by us. Because without the one or the other, we shall not even yet be able to stand: And which, though God hath promised, yet must we pray for it; because *Asking* is made the Condition of *having*; and which, through our former Neglect or Abuse, may not otherwise be always ready at hand in that Proportion as may answer our present Need; Grace being liable to impair, and Temptations apt to grow upon us. And therefore, by Praying not to be led into the Power of a Temptation, not only Assistance, but suitable and sufficient Assistance is what we hereby pray for. And further, therefore

3. That God would exert and stir up the Grace bestowed upon us at the time of Conflict. Which otherwise, being clogg'd with our Corruptions or Infirmities, may leave us to be surprized; and of which he only who gives the Grace, can excite the Activity to be useful and sufficient for our Security. And, to make all sure, we also hereby pray,

4. That God would continue both the Grace and its Activity, as long as the Temptation continues to molest us. Because all will be Lost by yielding though never so late. Continuance being as ne-



cellary as the first Collation of Defence for Security. And he that stands not out to the last, may lose, in some Sence more than he that never stood at all, whose Pains and Glory are both at stake.

And thus, then, are we directed by this part of the Petition, to deprecate the *Assault and Dominion of Temptation*: Desiring that, if it be the good Pleasure of our *Heavenly Father*, we might be preserved from the Approaches, and excused the Conflict of *Temptations*; those especially, to which we are most inclinable, or which are most Potent to prevail upon us. And however, that God would never so deliver us up to their Power as to be overcome and led away thereby, but would give us *suitable Grace*, in a *Comperent Measure*, and excite and continue it *Active* in us, so as to secure our Innocency. For which, though we thus address God only, yet that we may not therefore suppose him the Author of the *Evil* hereby deprecated, it will be seasonable now also to Consider,

How God  
doth lead  
us into  
Tempta-  
tion.

III. *How God may be supposed to lead therein*; that so we may neither over-charge him with the blame of our own Guilt, nor yet over-look him by neglecting to pray to him for our Security therefrom. For by Praying to him *Not to lead us*, we do suppose that when we are *led into Temptation*, it is by him; who yet, St. James assurcth us, *tempteth no Man*. That therefore we may neither injure the Purity of God, nor infringe the Authority of this Petition, but avoiding Extremes, do Right to both, and fully understand what we are to mean hereby, we may safely with Truth suppose God interested in *Leading us into Temptation* these three several ways, viz.

I. By

1. *By the External Dispensation of his Providence*; whereby all the Objects and Occasions administering to our Lusts, are ordered. Which though it doth not make God our Tempter, because we are at Liberty to prevent its becoming a Temptation, which only our own Lusts make so; yet it, in some sort, Entitling him to the *Leading us into it*, justifies our addressing him with this Deprecation against it; whereby we pray that God would be pleased so to order, by his over-ruling Providence, all the Occurrences of our Lives, as not to lay before us those *Objects*, nor profer us those *Opportunities* which might either excite or draw forth our inbred *Corruptions* to rebel against him. *By Providence.*

2. *God leadeth into Temptation, by permitting his Providential Occasions to tempt us*: All being under his Power not to assault or hurt any further than he gives leave. For he is the Lord, and Superintendent of all the World, under whose restraint and power are all the unruly Hearts of Men, and Wiles of Satan, none of which can stir without a Commission, or at least a Permission from God to execute that Evil which is in their Wills and Natures. And therefore when we are tempted thereby, though God no way contributes either to the Temptation or our Fall by it, yet he may be said to *lead us into it*, who suffereth us to be led when it was in his Power to hinder, and which if he had done we could not have been ensnared thereby. In which Sence, it is certain, there is no Temptation befalleth us but God *leadeth us into it*, according to the Phrase of Scripture, frequently attributing that to God, which came to pass only by his Permission. And therefore, in this Sence also we hereby Pray, That God *would*

*By Permission.*

Gen. 45.

5.

2 Sam. 24.

1.

1 Chr. 21.

1.

Aet. 2. 23.

would restrain the Power of our *Lusts*, of *Satan*, and *Evil Men* from hurting us; and not be provoked by our Provocations to let loose the Fury of their Temptations upon us; but so keep under all their Evil Intentions by the rigour of his Almighty Dominion, as never, by his just Suffe-  
*rance, to lead us into Temptation.*

*In Judg-  
 ment.*

3. *This, finally, God may be said to do, by withholding, or withdrawing his Protection from us, and leaving us under the Power of those Temptations, which he suffered by his Providential Administration to assault us.* For tho' this have no influence, either upon the Temptation, or our Fall by it, yet since the Success of that Temptation, and our Fall by it, follow upon it, as unavoidably as if they were really influenced by it, it may well pass under the Notion of *leading into Temptation.* For being left helpless, who are unable to help our selves, we must necessarily be *led away* Captive at the Will of our Enemy; and those Temptations which, when we are assisted with God's gracious Protection, we should certainly escape, or easily resist and subdue, will when God leaveth us to our selves, unavoidably lay hold on, and sadly prevail over us. Hereby, therefore, we further Pray, that God would still continue to us the Influences of his restraining, and renewing Graces; and not in Judgment be provoked to give

*Pf. 81. 12. us up unto our own Hearts Lusts; to walk in our own Counsels; nor expose us naked and defenceless to the Assaults and Power of every Temptation; Deprecating his Desertion as our certain Ruin; and therefore, in the Psalmist's words crying out,*  
*27. 9. Hide not thy Face far from Me, put not thy Servant away in Anger; thou hast been mine help, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my Salvation.*

Thus



Thus far then, God evidently appearing to be interested in our being tempted; even so far as concerns his *Common Providence*, his *Permission*, and judicial *Desertion* of us, whereby we are *led into the Temptation*, which otherwise we could not have fallen into; for the further clearing our Vindication of his Holiness and Justice, it is requisite that we proceed also to Consider,

IV. *Why he, who can hinder it, doth yet thus lead us into Temptation.* For which, among other Reasons, these seem the Principal. *Why God suffers Temptati-*

1. *This God may do for the Exercise and Tryal of good Men's Graces*; without which they could neither appear, nor long continue to be what they really are. Practice both *Discovers* and *Improves* Skill; for want whereof it is both *Disregarded* and quickly *Lost*. Tried Professors are the only eminent Christians; having peculiar Graces, in a peculiar Degree, Capacitating them for a peculiar Glory. Therefore saith St. James, *Blessed is the Man that endureth Temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life; which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* *on. Jam. i. 12.*

2. God hereby would convince us of our depending wholly upon him; as not being able to stand without him, nor any longer than while we engage his *Providence*, and *Permission* and *Grace* for our Security; whereby he *leading us into Temptation*, shews us, when we do not fall, by whose Power it is we are preserved, to whom we are to flee for Succour, whom we ought to please, and to whom belongeth the Glory of our Safety. Not unto us, O Lord; Not unto us; but unto thy Name, who has the Disposal and Power of all *Temptations* in thy own hand, be all the Praise and Glory of our Preservation!



3. *Hereby God also glorifieth his Justice in the Punishment of wicked Men*; the desert of whose *past Sins* provokes him to *lead them into Temptations*, that will ensnare them in *future Sins*, and thereby to give them up to the Course of Life they will not reform, to be hurried from Sin to Sin, till having filled up the *Measure thereof*, the *full Vials of Divine Wrath* shall be *paured out* and emptied upon them, in the everlasting Miseries of a damned State; which is the saddest Judgment, though the most common Punishment inflicted for Sin, to be trembled at, and earnestly deprecated by every Sinner. And yet, further,

4. *Hereby God ministreth Occasions of greatly glorifying his Mercy*; by his seasonable Succours, and sufficient Supports, and effectual Deliverances in times of *Temptation*; which have excited so many hearty Thanksgivings, and devout Hymns of Praise, which otherwise God's Name might never have had the Glory of: God's Mercies never appearing more perfect, nor being more thankfully resented than in pinching Streights and seasonable Deliverances; even as the darkest Night renders the brightness of the Stars most refulgent. And therefore to manifest the Lustre of Divine Mercy, God seemeth necessitated to *lead us frequently into Temptation*. Especially, since moreover,

5. *Hereby the Dignity and Power of Godliness is mightily demonstrated and recommended*. Baffled *Temptations* afford the highest Honour to the Cause of Religion, and give the greatest Blow to confound the Tempter. To profess strict Piety in Ease and Prosperity, is lyable to be censured as Mercenary and Hypocrisie, both by Men and Satan; but to remain unshaken in Adversity, and to hazard all to retain Integrity, is confessedly Heroick

Heroick and Brave, commanding the Plaudits of both Heaven and Earth. Insomuch that in all Ages the Constancy of Confessors hath ever been observed, to succeed to the Interest of Religion; whose Blood spilt in resisting *Temptations*, hath therefore been called *the Seed of the Church*; yea, and though it hath oft hapned, that *Temptations* have prevailed, and seldom any have come off always Conquerors in the Conflict; yet further,

6. *God may lead us even into a Conquering Temptation in order to perfect and confirm our Reformation.* Such *Falls* oft, by God's Grace, being made instrumental of a more sound *Recovery*. And though the State will create some Trouble and Difficulty, yet it tends to great Good in the end; and we may rise again with Glory thence. The Sence of our Sin, and the Shame of a Defeat will naturally fill a good Man with Sorrow, Indignation and self-Revenge; will give new Spirit, Vigour, Activity and Resolution; will render him more patient of Hardships and Sufferings; more unwearied in Well-doing; more Humble and Modest; more Watchful and Subtile; more Compassionate and Charitable towards the Weaknesses and Failings of others; and more perfectly resigned to the Will of God, to dispose of us, and our Services to his own Glory as he pleaseth: Even the worst Foils having oft made the stoutest Champions, and the greatest *Temptations* the best Christians. And therefore,

7. Lastly, *Hereby we are made conformable to our great Exemplar, and Captain of our Salvation; who trod out to us the Path to Glory, through this difficult Passage of Temptations; whose Followers we are, and whose Badge we only wear, by contending after him, through the Snares and*

Mat. 10.  
24.

Difficulties of this wilderness. *The Disciple is not above his Lord, nor the Scholar above his Master.* And if God saw it fit to suffer *Christ* himself to be tempted, it is not for us either to dispute or hope for an Exemption.

So reasonable is the Account that may be given of God's *leading into Temptation*, without *tempting* any to *Evil* thereby; and consequently for our making it the matter of our Deprecation to him, that we may not be led by him thereinto, any otherwise than he sees it requisite for his Glory and our Good; and, therefore, to express more fully the meaning of our Desire herein, we are taught to add, *But Deliver us from Evil*; and are now brought to Consider, as was proposed,

What the  
Evil is we  
beg Deli-  
verance  
from

V. *What [the Evil] is we herein beg Deliverance from.* For that is something distinct from the *Temptation*, we before prayed *not to be led into*, is signified by the Discretive Particle [*But*]: And that yet it hath relation thereto, is also signified by the Connexion the same Particle intends. And therefore as we are to distinguish between *Temptation* and *Evil*, so are we to understand this *Evil* to be something arising from, and depending on the *Temptation*, because of which we pray *not to be led into it*. For were it not for the *Evil*, *Temptation* would not be deprecated; being no *Evil* in its self; but the Matter and Occasion of much Good to them that are Tempted. It is an inherent *Evil* in the *Tempter*; but in the *Tempted* it is only accidental, and no *Evil* 'till it hath prevailed to Sin. And therefore, we pray against *Temptation* only for the sake of that *Evil* it tendeth to; but we pray against that *Evil* for the sake of its self: *That*, with Submission to Divine Pleasure, but *This*, absolutely as necessary to our  
own



own Safety. The *Danger* of Evil, which is *Temptation*, we would, if it might so please God, avoid, and pray *not to be led* into it; but the *Damage* of Evil, which is the *Evil* of *Temptation*, we absolutely pray to be *delivered from*.

Indeed when we speak of *Evil*, every Man will straight Fancy to himself that *Evil* which he is most afraid of; the *Covetous Poverty*, the *Ambitious Disgrace*, the *Voluptuous Sorrow*; although these are rather but the *Consequents* of *Evil*, and are oft found good; the principal *Evil* of all is *Sin*, and only that whereby any *Temptation* can hurt us, being simply, and in its own Nature an *Evil*. And therefore to pray against This, is to pray against all other *Evils* whatsoever. And, considering the comprehensiveness of this Prayer, and Indefiniteness of the *Evil* deprecated in this Petition, we ought to understand it, in the most unlimited Sense, as comprehending under it all kind of *Evil*, whether *Instrumental*, *Penal* or *Real*, which is only *Sin* with its *Adjuncts*, partaking in *Name*, as agreeing in *Interest*. Thus, then, hereby we may be intended to pray against

1. *Evil Instrumentally* such; desiring to be *delivered from* the Instruments of *Sin*, giving Success to the *Temptations*, whereby we are at any time enslaved thereto. And which are our spiritual Enemies, the *World*, the *Flesh* and the *Devil*, whence all our *Sin* and *Sorrow* proceed. And, therefore, we are accordingly directed and encouraged to oppose our selves against them, and to *Watch and Pray*, and by our own Endeavours and Divine Assistance, strive to *overcome the World*, to *mortifie the Flesh*, and to *resist the Devil*; which is to seek *Deliverance from* them as *Evil*, whence the *Devil* is, therefore, particularly styled [the  
Evil



[ὁ πονη-  
ρος]

*Evil One*] as being the first Inventor and great Encourager of *Evil*, and called the *Father of those that do Evil*. For which reason some have limited the word *Evil* in this *Pétition* wholly to him. Who yet can do no *Evil* but by *Sin*; which the *World* and our own *Lusts* also incline us to; and who therefore is no otherwise the *Evil One* than they are; which we have as much reason to pray against, and comprehend with him under this general Title. Beseeching God to preserve us from *Sin*, through whatever means; and that whether we stand or fall by the *Temptation* he shall at any time try us with, yet that he would still keep us under his own Conduct, and *Deliver us from the Thralldom of all our spiritual Enemies*.

2. *Hereby, also, we pray against Evil Penally such*. Which is the *Punishment* due to the *Sin* we are tempted to, and executed, whether by *Temporal, Spiritual, or Eternal Sufferings* upon us. For, *Temporal and Bodily Sufferings are the Effects of Sin*. *Fools, because of their Transgression, and because of their Iniquities, are afflicted*. And though Afflictions are oft made the Cure of *Sin*, yet are they never the more, of themselves, the Object of Choice or Desire, because their Convenience is owing only to our Necessity. For thus the Searing or Amputation of a Limb, may be the only Cure for a Gangrene, and yet no Man but will desire to be *Delivered from this Evil*, unless Necessity incline to submit thereto, as good for his present Circumstances, though still an *Evil* to his Sense and Feeling. And therefore, we deprecate the *Evil* even of these Evils, and though we are chearfully to submit to the Correction, yet as we are to endeavour, so we may pray not to need it, and so far as God pleaseth, to be delivered

Pl. 107.  
17.

livered

*livered from it, to serve him in rest and quietness all our days.*

But as for *Spiritual Sufferings*, that wound the Soul here, and *Eternal Evils* that destroy the Man hereafter; being irreconcilably repugnant to both God's Will and Glory, and inconsistent with our own Happiness; and which are the unavoidable Consequents, and the Evil of Sin unrepented of; there is no doubt but we are absolutely to deprecate, and beg to be *delivered* from them. And yet because even these are but Sprouts from a worse Root, we are especially

3. *Hereby intended to pray against Evil, really and formally such; which is Sin; from whence all that is Evil proceeds, and by which alone any Evil can hurt.* Upon the serious Consideration whereof, as we were directed, in the preceding Petition, to pray for *pardoning Mercy*; and, in the former part of this Petition afterwards for *preventing Mercy*; so here we are taught to pray for *restoring Mercy*; That God having *forgiven* our past *Trespases*, he would preserve us from the Occasions, or however *Deliver us from* the Mischief of ever falling into the like Transgressions, and then we doubt not but to be safe from all *Evil* whilst Innocent. And what this, also, implies will now be shewn, by Considering

VI. *What the deliverance is, and how wrought for us by God, for which we here Address him.* Which according to the Notation of the Word, importing Restoration to former Safety from some *Evil*, to which it always hath relation, and here to the *Evil of Temptation* we are supposed to have been led into; therefore such as is that *Leading into Temptation* supposed to have preceded, such must this *Deliverance* from its *Evil* be consequently meant to be;

be; which implieth accordingly these two things, viz. 1. A Freedom from the continued *Assaults*, and, 2. A Freedom from the prevailing *Dominion of Temptations* (This having been supposed the only sense wherein we were *led into Temptations*.) And which (as to the *Manner* of working this for us,) is always dispensed one of these two ways; Either, by *Recovery* or by *Preservation*. For, as there are two things in Sin which makes it so *exceeding Sinful*, even the *Guilt* of it whereby it *Damnth*, and the *Filth* of it whereby it polluteth us, so God may *Deliver us* two Ways. *The first*, by removing the Guilt already contracted; which is by *Forgiving us our Trespases*, prayed for in the preceding Petition *The latter*, by preventing us from falling into the Filth and Pollution of it for the future, which we now beg in this Petition; it not being enough to be *Pardoned* our *Past*, unless also we are *preserved from Future Sins*, so as that they may not have any more Dominion over us. And this *Deliverance* is wrought for us by God, either by *Restraining* or *Sanctifying* us.

*Restraining by Providence.*

1. *God delivereth from the Evil of Temptations by restraining Sinners*; whether by his *Providence* or *Grace*.

*The Providence of God* is a very visible Instrument of with-holding Sinners from multitudes of *Evil*, they are wholly bent upon, and would otherwise be certainly ruin'd by; to which all Men are greatly indebted for the Innocency of their Lives. It being *This* that oft cuts off the *Power to Sin*; either by removing the *Instruments* both for Counsel and Execution, or striking the *Person* of a Sinner, by depriving him of the use of his natural Faculties by which he would be enabled



bled to commit his intended Sin ; besotting his Intellect, numbing his Hands, so as that he neither knows how, nor hath present Power to ruin himself with the *Evil* that tempteth ; or by shortning his Life ; and, in this Sence, taking away even the wicked, as well as *Righteous Men* from the *Evil* to come. Or by opposing insuperable Obstacles, by unexpected Accidents, and urgent Diversions, whereby the Sinner cannot do the *Evil* he would ; an intervening Providence preventing, no less than leading into Temptation. But the Grace of God is the only effectual Instrument of Deliverance by restraint from Sin, not only without, but even against the external Dispositions of Providence. Whereby God, though he change not the Nature, yet he Alters the present Inclination of Mens hearts ; awakens natural Conscience ; cools Resolution ; and even against the Will, takes Men off the Prosecution of those Sins they yield to the Temptation of ; and towards which they remain yet unmortified. So that by the Grace of God, not only good Men are what they are, but wicked Men are not what they would be ; since all bad Men would be worse, were they always left intirely to themselves, and not, unwittingly as well as undeservedly, thus Delivered from evil Practices by being Restrained from them.

Isa. 57. 1.

By Grace.

2. *God delivereth from the Evil of Temptations, Sanctify-  
by sanctifying and renewing his Servants. Which ing.*  
not only imposeth a Restraint, but infuseth an Aversion against Sin ; and is the greatest Deliverance from Evil we are capable of on this side Heaven, where our converse is with *Evil*. And therefore in praying to be Delivered, we desire to be free'd not only from the hurt of Sin, but even from the Inclination to it ; and not only to cease

to



to do Evil, but learn to do Well; that Sin may cease  
 1 Cor. 15. to be a Temptation to us; and by our abounding  
 58. always in the Work of the Lord, we may continue  
 stedfast and immovable amidst whatever Solicitati-  
 ons of the World, the Flesh or the Devil. The  
 which Petition that we may be hearty in; Con-  
 sider we also, in a word,

*Necessity* VII. Lastly, *The Necessity we lie under of suppli-*  
*of Praying* cating such a Deliverance from our Father which is in  
*to be De-* Heaven. Which will appear from the Consider-  
*ivered.* ration of,

1. *The Evil prayed to be Delivered from.* Which  
 is that of Temptation to Sin, it being the worst of  
 Evil, and the Cause of all that is Evil, and the  
 work of the Evil One, wherewith we are beset  
 within by the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, and with-  
 out by the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World,  
 in every Condition, in every Employment, in  
 all Companies, and at all Times, walking among  
 Snarps, and running upon Precipices, threatening  
 with everlasting Destruction, which nothing  
 but Divine Perservation can possibly secure us  
 from. And under such present Disadvantages  
 and Eminent Dangers, how acceptable and neces-  
 sary doth Deliverance appear? Especially consid-  
 ring, also,

2. *The Deliverance freeing from such Evil.* Which  
 is not only certain, but every way sufficient;  
 being beyond what is human or created; and  
 whereon alone depend all the Comforts both of  
 this Life and the next; since he, whose Life is  
 govern'd by the Providence and Grace of God,  
 and Nature renew'd and sanctified by the Holy  
 Spirit, cannot but be easie and safe; and he, who  
 is left to himself and captivated unto Sin, cannot  
 but be miserable, having no bounds set to Guilt  
 here,

here, nor Torment hereafter. So that, in asking such a *Deliverance*, we supplicate all that is Good, and deprecate all that is Evil. And which requires Importunacy, Considering, further,

3. *Our own Inability to Deliver thus our selves.* Being naturally both *Careless*, where the greatest Circumspection is requisite; and *Inclined* to those very *Evils* we are tempted to, and need *Deliverance from*. So that whilst we pursue the *Evil* of *Temptation*, we follow our own Lust; and by our own Inadvertency, give advantage to the Cunning Craftiness of our Spiritual Enemies to lead us Captive. Therefore St. Paul taught that we are *not sufficient of our selves*, even to think any thing as of our selves; but our *Sufficiency is of God*. And <sup>2 Cor. 3. 5.</sup> considering this too, the necessity of importuning God by this *Petition* appeareth, finally in that,

4. *Lastly, God alone is able to deliver us from the Evil of Temptation*: Whose Providence and Grace boundeth all *Temptation*, and whose sanctifying Spirit, mortifies and destroys the *Evil* thereof. His *Grace is sufficient for us*; and 'tis his *Work in us* <sup>2 Cor. 12. 9.</sup> to will, and to do of his Good Pleasure: And therefore to him, as we are, in this Prayer, directed <sup>Phi. 2. 13.</sup> to Address our selves for *Daily Bread*, and *Daily Pardon*, so are we no less necessitated and taught to come for *Daily Deliverance from the worst of Evil* by the greatest *Mercy*, for which we are unable of our selves, and which God only can bestow: Desiring not to be led into *Temptation*, but to be delivered from *Evil*. And, therefore,

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so <sup>4th Sund.</sup> many and great Dangers, that by reason of the <sup>after the</sup> frailty of our Nature we cannot always stand up-  
right: So Dispose thy Providence, over-  
rule

' Rule our *Lusts*, restrain the Subtlety of the  
 ' *Devil*, the Allurements of the *World*, and  
 ' Malice of all *wicked Men* from withdraw-  
 ' ing our Allegiance from thee; and so fol-  
 ' low us with the continued Influences of  
 ' thy restraining and renewing Grace, that  
 ' we may never either Tempt, or be Tempt-  
 ' ed to offend against thee; But to thy great-  
 ' er Honour, and our own Reformation we  
 ' may be *Delivered*, if thou seeest it best,  
 ' from the *Occasions*, especially, of those Sins  
 ' we are the aptest to fall into; and whate-  
 ' ver thou shalt inflict upon us, give us not  
 ' not up unto the Power of any Sin; But in  
 ' all our Temptations, make us ever a way to  
 ' escape; and Grant to us such Strength and  
 ' Protection, as may support us in all Dangers, and  
 ' carry us through all Temptations, through Jesus  
 ' Christ our Lord. Amen.

## S E R M O N XLIII.

O N T H E

Doxology of the LORD'S  
P R A Y E R.

Matt. vi. 13.

— *For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power,  
and the Glory, for Ever.*

**H**AVING Committed our selves to the Divine Protection in the *last Petition*, as very properly concluding our Requests to God; we are next directed to ascribe to the Divine Power and Goodness, the Glory of our *Deliverance* in this *Doxology*, which is the *Third of those Parts*, into which we distinguished the *Lord's Prayer* at first, and now followeth as a seasonable Acknowledgment of our Gratitude, and Profession of the reason of our Requests, whereon we ground our Faith and Hope of obtaining what we have Prayed for.

Concerning which, three things will be insisted on, *viz.* The *Authority*, The *Use* and the *Meaning* hereof.

The *Authority* of this *Doxology* here, hath been variously received and disputed among Christians, *because* *The Authority of this Petition.*

Cc



because omitted by *St. Luke*, and not found in some of the Greek Copies of *St. Matthew's Gospel*. Yet it hath been generally observed, that *St. Luke's Omission* was either an effect of his accustomed Brevity, in reciting what had before been fully recorded, and was sufficiently known; or was referable to a different Delivery of this Prayer, wherein this part of it might for good Reasons, deduced from *Jewish Rites* \* (to which our Lord frequently alluded) be left out here having before been recorded; and, also that among the many, there are but only two Greek Copies of *St. Matthew*, whereof one is not unsuspected, † that want, which are not comparable to those that have it. And, moreover, it not being to be supposed, that ever the Church would have allowed this Addition in *St. Matthew*, or that any would have presumed to have imposed upon our Saviour words to have been spoken by him which he never said; or if they had, that, to gain greater Credit thereto, they should not have inserted them also in *St. Luke's Gospel*; therefore has the Authentickness hereof been generally acknowledged, as a true, as well as useful part of the *Lord's Prayer*. And though the *Catechism*, I am explaining, following probably *St. Luke's* silence, doth omit it; and our *Church-Liturgy*, following both *Evangelists*, doth order the Repetition of this Prayer, both with and without this *Doxology*: Yet forasmuch, as its Authority is never question'd among us, and our *Catechumens* are constantly permitted to recite it, and this could not be a perfect Form and Pattern of Prayer without it, therefore it is as necessary to be learnt and understood, as any other part of our *Lord's Prayer* whatsoever.

\* Doctor  
Lightfoot  
in Loc.

† Doctor  
Tower-  
son's Ex-  
plicat, &c.

The

*The Use of this Doxology intended in the place Assigned it in this Prayer, plainly seemeth to be two fold, according to our Acceptation thereof, either simply and absolutely in its self, or Relatively with respect to the Petitions preceding, being both a Form of Praise and Thanksgiving; and a Reason of our Petitions, with the ground of our Hope of obtaining what we Pray for.*

*its Use  
and In-  
tent.*

*As a Form of Praise and Thanksgiving, it (as hath been said) perfects and compleats a Pattern for Prayer, agreeable to the main end of all Worship, and the Exercise of the most acceptable, as well as profitable Service to God. For a Prayer is scarce compleat without Praises; it being too selfish to ask all from God, and return nothing to him. And therefore St. Paul enjoyning us to let our Requests be made known unto God, in every thing by Prayer and Supplication, he addeth, with Thanksgiving. Which therefore, it is not to be supposed our Saviour teaching his Followers to Pray, would omit; and which yet is no where inserted, unless in these words; to which the Name of Doxology hath been given, to put us in mind of the the Use intended thereby, for the explicit Acknowledgment of the Divine Perfections, to the Honour and Praise of our Heavenly Father. So that as we began this Prayer, as was but meet, with an Address to, and Acknowledgment of the Glories of the Divine Majesty; and continued the same with our earnest Desires of the Exaltation thereof; even that God's Name might be Hallowed, His Kingdom come, and his Will be done; so now we are fitly directed to close all with the same blessed Employment; that the Glory of God may be made (as it ever ought to be) the Beginning and End of all our Actions, especially of all*

*To Praise  
God.*

*Phil. 4. 6.*

our Devotions, and we may now begin to conform our Practice to our Prayers (without which Prayer is of no effect) and give that to God our selves, which we before pray'd might be offered to him by others, even *Kingdom, Power and Glory for ever*. And though thus much may hereby be intended by us, yet is not this all its Use; since, as hath been said, it may be also annexed to this Prayer,

To enforce  
our Peti-  
tions.

*As a Reason of our Petitions, with the ground of our Hope of obtaining what we Pray for.* Which the Causal Particle [*For* or *Because*] wherewith it is introduced seemeth plainly to intimate, and which fitly accords with the Divine Praise, to encourage the Devotion thereof. And therefore we not only address God, but we express the *Reasonableness* and *Benefit* of so doing: Therefore falling down, and offering to him both our Prayers and Praises, *For, or Because, his is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for ever*; hereby encouraging both the Practice of our Duty and *Hope* of Success from it. And tho' no Argument we can alledge, can be supposed to alter the Purposes and Determinations of God as to any Event that he hath ordained; yet it is evident, that the Use of Arguments in Prayer may mightily conduce to the quickening of our Devotions, and strengthening of our Faith; and therewith to plead with

Hos. 14. 2. God, is both what he alloweth, and encourageth;  
Exod. 32. and the devoutest Men have ever been most con-  
11, &c. versant in, and expected to succeed therefrom.  
Jos. 7, 8, 9. And since of all Reasons and Arguments the most  
2 Chr. 20. forcible is deducible from the Divine *Attributes*,  
6. (God doing all *for his own Name Sake*) therefore is this *Doxology* most fitly annexed, as such, for Encouragement and Enforcement of such a comprehensive and weighty Prayer.

The

*The Sence and Meaning whereof*, will be particularly explained by distinguishing these *Four Attributes* ascribed to and pleaded with God therein, <sup>His Sence and Meaning explained.</sup> which are his *Sovereignty*, [*Thine is the Kingdom*]; His *Omnipotency*, [*The Power*]; his *Majesty or Honour*, [*And the Glory*]; and his *Eternity*, [*For ever*]. Concerning every one of which, we shall consider these three things, viz. 1. Its *Importance*. 2. God's *Propriety* therein; and 3. Its *Fitness* to answer its Design in this *Doxology*, both for the *Praise* of and *Pleading* with God; beginning with the *First* of these *Attributes*, viz.

1. *The Sovereignty of God*, which is implied in *God's Sovereignty* the *Kingdom* ascribed to him; for the *Coming* whereof, in a more restrained Sence, we were taught to Pray in the *Second Petition*, and here ascribe it to, and urge upon him in the most unlimited and comprehensive Sence,

1. *Hereby meaning the Authoritative Power of God as exercised, whether in the Dominion of his Providence, of his Grace, or of his Glory; by the first, disposing of all the World in general; by the second, Governing more particularly his Church-Militant here on Earth; and by the last, presiding over his Church-Triumphant in Heaven; these evincing such Dominion to be Independent in respect both to its Original and Exercise; and therefore it is called Emphatically [The] Kingdom; That which ruleth over all, and can be ruled by none other, either to receive any Direction, or to render any Account for the Administration thereof: Nor can it be other than Infinite; whether in respect of its Object, having both Heaven and Earth, and all things therein subjected to it; or in respect to the Manner of its Administration, being absolute over every Person, Nation, and Thing;*



or, Finally, in respect to its *Duration*, which is for ever, being exercised over immortal Beings, *Ps. 145. 13* and is an *Everlasting Kingdom*, and a *Dominion that endureth throughout all Generations*.

*Peculiar to God.*

2. *God's Propriety herein*, is acknowledged when we say, *Thine is the Kingdom*. Without which he would not be God, and with which he can be no other, being Supreme and highest in Authority, and a great King above all Gods; whose all the World is, and on whom it depends to be govern'd and dispos'd of according to its Maker's Pleasure; whose Wisdom and Justice, and Power, and Goodness, not only Merits, but alone Capacitates him for such a Dominion. So that among the Gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord, neither are there any works like unto thy works. All Nations whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorifie thy Name. Amen.

*And fitly acknowledged in Prayer.*

3. *The Fitness hereof* to answer its Design intended in this *Doxology*, is very manifest, both for the Praise of, and Pleading with God in our Prayers. 1. To the Praise of God, the Attribute of his Dominion is very agreeable, and necessarily conducing; being so bright a Ray of Divinity, and of so benign an Influence upon our selves. For Royalty, on whomsoever placed, commands Applause from all Beholders; but where also it is well deserved, by a peculiar Lustre, it Charms the Affections, and attracts the Praises of all within the compass of its Influence. Therefore, in most of the Forms of Praise, recorded of the Saints in Scripture, we still meet with this Divine Attribute as a principal Ingredient; without which God could neither be duely acknowledged, nor Man so highly exalted in this Celestial Employment. The Psalmist, no less than five times together

together in one Psalm, calleth upon Men to sing *Praises* to him, as *the King of all the Earth*; and when he would extol his God, he acknowledgeth him to be *King* also; and because *the Lord reigneth*, he rightly thinks *the Earth* obliged to *rejoyce*, being under the Tuition of such a Governance, wherein God's Condescension in undertaking, and the World's Felicity by submitting, is truly Thank-worthy. And, 2. *Herewith, also we rightly Plead with God for Success in Prayer*; from his Ability to do for us even beyond what we can ask or think; and more particularly, what we have been taught to desire of him in this Prayer. For *the Kingdom*, and Sovereignty of all the World, being God's, we are hereby confirm'd in Faith, that he hath the Power of bestowing all Blessings, Spiritual and Temporal, upon his faithful Subjects; and will see to the *Hallowing of his Name*, and maintaining of his Honour among them; and to the *Coming of his Kingdom* to its full Increase and Establishment; and to the *Doing of his Will* according to his absolute Authority; and to the Provision of *Daily-Bread*, and Concession of *Forgiveness*, and Protection and *Deliverance* from Evil; without which, as we should have but little Encouragement to address him, so should we have less Confidence to expect such mighty things from him. Therefore, having made known our Requests to God, thus we *Laud* him and Ground our *Hopes* for acceptance with him. *For thine is the Kingdom, O our Father, which art in Heaven*, and whither should we go for Relief but to thee, who hast all things at Command? Hereby therefore we acknowledge our Subjection to, and Dependence on thee; and we thy poor Subjects become Suppliants to thee. Such is the Significa-

Pf. 47. 6,  
Ec.

—145. 1.

—97. 1.

on of the *Soveraignty* of God, which is the first of the Divine Attributes mention'd in this *Doxology*. The next is,

God's  
Omnipo-  
tence.  
What it  
is.

II. *The Omnipotence of God*; for *thine is* ( *as the Kingdom* so also ) *the Power*.

1. *By which we are to mean*, as to its Being a Principle, an Ability to do all things not repugnant, either to the Nature of Things, or of God; neither implying a Contradiction in the Thing, nor an Imperfection in the Doer; from which all other Power is derived, upon which it depends, and to which it is perfectly subject and subordinate, this being not only equal to, but exceeding all, and irresistible to any other Power; acting in the most perfect Manner, in an instant, at once and with Ease, beyond the utmost of what we are able to imagine; and which as to the *Exercise* hereof, we believe to be limited only by the Divine Will, determining it according to God's good Pleasure, and the Divine Wisdom directing it, according to the Counsel of his Will.

Peculiar  
to God.

2. *God's Propriety herein*, we here acknowledge also by the Possessive [*Thine*]; no less relating to this than to the preceding Attribute whereto it is immediately prefixed; and by the Conjunctive [*And*] connecting this and that inseparably together; and without which an universal Kingdom could neither to God's Praise, nor our Comfort be ascribed to him. Therefore whose the Kingdom is, His is also the Power, in the most eminent and peculiar manner; manifested in those two great Instances and Expressions thereof, *Creation* and *Providence*; the invisible things of God from the Creation of the World, being clearly seen; being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and God-head; and without which all other

Rom. 1.  
20.



ther Perfections could either not be, or would be insignificant and ineffectual. This the *Scriptures* have abundantly revealed to us, so that none, who have read the same, but may take up the *Psalmist's* Declaration, and say, *God hath spoken* Pf. 62. 11.  
*once; twice have I heard this*, even again and again what God hath reveal'd I have learnt, *That Power belongeth unto God.* And then,

3. *The Fitness of this Attribute*, also, to answer its intention here, in this *Doxology*, is no less apparent, both as a *Laud to his Praise*, and as an *Argument* to urge the Success of our Prayer. For, And fitly acknowledged in Prayer.

1. *To God's Praise* we are agreeably taught to say, *Thine is the Power*, as being That from whence not only many of his other Excellencies are inferrible, but whence they all receive their Life and Activity, whereby he is exalted in our Notions and Esteem of his Nature; which otherwise would be Libell'd by ascribing to him his other Perfections without this. And therefore, in all the solemn Forms of Praise to him, in *Scripture*, we still find this not only Principally acknowledged and more seldom omitted than any other of his *Attributes*, but also very often singled out, as that alone whereby God is exalted, and may be praised by us. Thus David sings, *Be thou* Pf. 21. 13.  
*exalted, Lord, in thine own Strength; so will we sing and Praise thy Power.* Wherefore it is called by Col. 1. 11.  
*St. Paul, a glorious Power.* And the *Psalmist* says, Pf. 145. 11.  
*They shall speak of the Glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy Power;* intimating hereby the necessity of extolling the Divine Power to give God the Glory of his *Kingdom*; so that God would but be mocked, instead of being praised by us, if we did not add to *Thine is the Kingdom*, *thine is the Power* also, which is the *Glory of that his Kingdom.*



*dom.* Nor do we herewith more necessarily *Praise* than also, 2. *Properly plead with God* in Prayer. Whereby alone we are assured, that nothing can be too great, nothing too hard for him to grant; and were it not for which, we might for ever despair of succeeding in the Petitions our Lord hath put into our Mouths, to address him with in this his Prayer. And therefore, to encourage us to ask things, great as our Wants, and whatsoever God hath promised; our *Saviour* saw it necessary to direct our Reflection on this Divine Attribute; which we have only to alledge in Vindication of our own Confidence, or to urge the Divine Goodness with for success in our Requests. Therefore, O *our Father*, who by that Title hast allowed us to believe thee willing, we thus own and urge thy Omnipotency, whereby we know thee to be able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the Power that worketh in us: For which we magnify thy Great Name; and for the sake whereof we confide in our poor Devotions towards thee; For *thine is the Power*.

Eph. 3.  
20.

God's  
Glory.

III. The next Attribute mention'd in this *Doxology*, is God's *Majesty and Honour*, which we ascribe to him when we say also, *For thine is the Glory*: For,

What it is

1. By this Word is properly signified any Excellency, or Perfection in a Subject, that either is, or deserves to be accompanied with Fame and Renown. And therefore the *Glory* ascribed to God may be conceived of as two-fold, viz. Essential and Internal, or External and Declarative.

God's *Essential and Internal Glory*, is the eminent Excellency of his Nature, whereby he merits

merits Praise and Glory from his Creatures, resulting from his Perfection, and placing him infinitely above all other Beings. For whatever God is, he is so gloriously and in Perfection; every Divine Attribute being infinitely Perfect in its self, and in Conjunction making up a *Glory* infinitely Great and Incomprehensible. Therefore as in the *Scriptures*, Holiness, and Power, and Majesty, and Dominion are ascribed to the Divine Nature, so is God said to be *Glorious* in these; Exod. 15. 11. 2 Thes. 1. 9. Col. 1. 10. Psal. 145. 5, 11. they being all Perfections in themselves, and being in the most perfect Degree and Manner in God. In which Sense, therefore, we acknowledge here the Merit of the Divine Excellency and Perfection. But then,

*God's External and Declarative Glory*, is the manifestation of this Excellency, to the notice and admiration of his Creatures, whereby he receives the Praise and Glory he merits, in a just Acknowledgment and due Opinion thereof; resulting from the Discoveries made of himself, whether in his *Word*, or by his *Works*, whether of *Creation*; from which the invisible things of God are clearly seen, or of *Providence*, both *Ordinary* and *Extraordinary*, whether in a way of *Mercy* or *Judgment*; or finally, of our *Redemption* by *Christ*, in whom, saith *St. John*, *We behold his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father.* By all which Rom. 1. 20. Jo. 1. 14. methods God hath manifested his Glory to us, and therein *Glorified himself*; not to allure our *Praises*, which he needeth not, and which can add nothing to him, but to communicate to us his *Perfections*; which therefore by our notice and admiration of them, we are said to *glorify God*; whether in our *Thoughts and Spirits*, by an inward Esteem and Reverence of his Majesty; or in our *Bodies*,

Pl. 50.23. *Bodies*, by outward Worship and Adoration; wherein *whofo offereth him Praise*, is said to glorifie God; or in *our Lives and Actions*, by conformity thereof to his Nature, being employed in what is Holy and Good, agreeable to God's Will; both setting forth what he is, and what he is most pleased and delighted with; the neglect whereof is to rob God of his Glory, suppressing or injuring his Repute and Esteem in the World.

Thus therefore, by the *Glory* ascribed here to God, we are intended to mean, both that *Perfection* which is alone his, and that *Honour* of it due from us to him. So that whatsoever it is, or shall be, that merits *Glory*, both *That* and the *Glory* of it, we must ascribe only to God, who is the most excellent Being in himself, and worthy to be Honoured and Praised, as such, by all his Creatures. Wherefore, we are taught also to say, *Thine is the Glory*, acknowledging hereby,

*Peculiar  
to God.*

2. *The Propriety of God herein*, and *Glory* to be a Divine Peculiar. For though some degrees of Excellency may be found in Creatures, yet is no Degree appropriated to them from God, whose alone it eminently is, as he is the *Original, Perfection* and *End* of all the *Glory* that is in the world

*God is Originally Glorious*; and whatever is Excellent and Glorious in the Creatures, is to be found either formally or eminently in him; who is Glorious from himself, and the Author, and Cause of whatever any other can pretend to merit by, or happen to be honoured with; no Man having any thing which he did not receive, nor receiving any thing which God did not give. So that our *Glory* is only God's in us; to whom all Praise ought ultimately to be referr'd, whose the *Glory* Originally is.

*God*

*God is Superlatively Glorious.* In whom alone *Glory* is in its Perfection, and in comparison to which all other is but Darkness. Our *Glories* are but Limited, Finite, Mixt and Communicated to us from another; whereas God's is Infinite, Pure, Immutable and Incommunicated; whose therefore *the Glory* only is, in the most Emphatical, Supream and Incomparable Measure.

*God is also ultimately Glorious*, even the End as well as Original of all the *Glory* that is, from whom as it comes, so ought it to return to him again; all the Excellencies in any Creature, serving only to illustrate the *Glory* of the Creator. And therefore whatever is admirable in another, ought to raise our Admiration from it to God who made it so; and the more Excellent any Endowments appear in the Creature, the greater advantage have we from them to raise our Esteem of the Creator; who alone is to terminate our Wonder, and in whom all our Praises are to concenter; whose Right it is, being the *King of Glory*; and *his Glory will he not give to another.*

Pf. 24. 10.

Isa. 42. 8.

3. *The Fitness* hereof, also, to answer its intent in this *Doxology*, is no less apparent from its Tendency to *Praise*, and *Plead* with God in Prayer. For, 1. *To the Praise of God*, this Attribute is so constantly and eminently applyed, that hitherto belong all those *Doxologies*, so frequent in the *Old* and *New Testament*, wherein Greatness and *Glory*, and Majesty are ascribed to God. Where- with *Seraphims* have Sang their Praises, and a

And fitly

acknow-

ledged in

Prayer.

Isa. 6. 3.

Lu. 2. 16.

Choir of *Angels* Celebrated the Nativity of the World's great Saviour, whose Church herewith honours the ever *Blessed Trinity* in their celebrated *Gloria Patri*: This Attribute alone being sufficient to express the highest *Praises*, and to discharge

charge



charge the humblest *Homage*. And no less fitly hereby, may we also, 2. *Plead with God*, and enforce our Petitions to prevail, as by the most reasonable Argument, with him in Prayer. For our having to do with *the God of all Glory*, (though it should awe us into the profoundest Reverence, yet) it will encourage our Addressees to him, wherein we offer to him *the Glory of our Dependence* by invoking his great Name, and the *Glory of his own Goodness and Power*, in granting our Requests, and the *Glory of our Praise and Thanksgiving* in accepting us. And therefore his being *the Glory of all*, who always Acts for that end, we may well hope to succeed, while we also make it the end of our Prayers, and pray only for such things as aim thereat; whence we fear not, however vile and impotent, and necessitous we are, to commit our selves to his Grace, to rely upon his Help, and to call upon him in time of Need, and

*At the end  
of the Li-  
tany.*

say, O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for thine Honour, that God may have that *Glory* from us which he hath from all others, that he hath formerly received, and for the sake of which, we may rest assured, that he will be much better to us than we can either desire or deserve from him. To God therefore be ascribed by us, in our Addresses to him, all *the Glory* both Internal and External, to the *Praise* of his Name, and *Success* of our Prayers; we hereby *Lauding* his Great Majesty, and *Urging* our own necessitous Requests, that thus by *Glorifying God* on Earth, he may *Glorify us* with himself in Heaven, even for ever and ever! And so we proceed to consider the remaining Attribute, which is,

*The Eternity of  
God.*

IV. Lastly, *The Eternity of God*; which after the *Dominion, Omnipotency, and Glory of God*, we

are taught in this *Doxology* to ascribe to him ; since whatever God is, he is such *for ever*, this being the Amplification of all his Attributes, and therefore to be referred and accommodated to those preceding it ; *The Kingdom being God's for ever*, *The Power* being also his *for ever*, and *The Glory* his *for ever* : This denoting the *Eternity* of God's Attributes, and consequently his Nature. And therefore to form a due Conception of God in our Minds, we are taught here by our Lord to ascribe and acknowledge, together with the other, this further Divine Perfection, and to say, *For thine is*, as *the Kingdom*, and *the Power*, and *the Glory*, so *thine* they are, *for ever* ; which also that we may conceive of in the most proper Notion of *Everlastingness*, it therefore hath pertinently enough obtain'd, after the *Scripture* manner of asserting great Certainties, to double the Expression and to say *for ever and ever*, importing God's *Eternity* in the most proper Notion thereof.

1. *The meaning therefore of this Attribute as What it is.* ascribed here to God is, That, according to the Ps. 90. 2. Psalmist's right Definition of *Eternity*, from *Everlasting to Everlasting he is God*, importing the perpetual continuance of the Divine Being, without beginning or ending : So that whatsoever number of Millions of Years one can imagine before the Creation of the World, yet must we conceive God to have been *Eternally* before these. Whereof though we have no particular Account, because neither necessary to, nor comprehensible by us, yet we are assured that God was from *Everlasting*, *Ibid.* before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever he Lam. 5. had formed the Earth and the World ; and that he 19. remaineth for ever, his Throne is from Generation to Generation, without the limits of time ; which yet

yet are necessarily made use of in *Scripture*, in Condescension to our Capacities, to convey to us a Notion of *Eternity*, which is an incomprehensible Duration, to which *Time* with its Adjuncts bears some resemblance; upon which Account the

Dan. 7. 9. Prophet *Daniel* styleth God *the Ancient of Days*,  
 Psal. 102. and the *Psalmist* maketh mention of *his Years*, that  
 27. they shall have no end, although neither *Days* nor *Years* are any measure, nor Age the effect of an *Eternal Duration*.

Peculiar  
 to God.

2. God's Propriety herein is what none ever yet went about to deprive him of; even they who had the wildest Notions, and the lowest and meanest Conceptions of the Divine Nature; which they rob'd of as many Perfections, as their imperfect Reason would let them, yet allowed him this; without which, some are observed, never to mention the name of God; and without which he could not be God; a Self-Existing, Simple, Prime, Immutable, Omnipotent and perfect Being; nor we be obliged to confide in his Promises of future Rewards, if the continuance of his Being, who should be the Dispenser of them, were uncertain. Therefore is he called in *Scripture*, the

Dii im-  
 mortales.

Deut. 33. 27. *Eternal God*, the first and the last, who inhabiteth  
 Isa. 43. 10. *Eternity*, The King *Eternal*, whose Mercy is from  
 ---- 57. 15. *Everlasting to Everlasting*, and *Power Eternal*; and  
 1 Tim. 1. therefore on the most certain grounds we say,  
 17. *Thine is all Perfection for ever and ever*—  
 Psal. 103. 17.

Rom. 1. 20. 3. The fitness of this Attribute, also, to answer,  
 And fitly its intent in this *Doxology*, to God's Praise, and  
 acknowledged in the support of our Prayers, is no less easie to ap-  
 Prayer. prehend. For, 1. To the Praise of God, we ascribe  
 an *Eternity* to him, that necessarily sets him above  
 either our *Inquiries* or *Censures*; which at once  
 attracts and puzzles *Admiration*; which renders  
 his



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his Counsels not to be fathom'd, nor his Perfections to be rival'd by us; which magnifies both his Person and Actions, as much as our *Mortality* degrades and shames our present Existence; and which is so necessary an Acknowledgment, that without its being either expressed or understood, no mention of God's other Attributes can make up a *Doxology*; all the Praise redounding to him from his *Kingdom*. Power and Glory, being, that we own them to be his *for ever and ever*. And, 2. *Herewith, also, we rightly Plead and Reason with God* for the Success of our Petitions: His *Eternity* being both our Engagement, and Encouragement to pray to him. For God being what he is *for ever*, even without Change or End, 'tis but just and fit that we should pay to him the same Homage and Service of our Devotions, that his *Saints* have done in former Ages; and depend upon him for the like Succour and Acceptance they have had, *O God, we have heard At the end with our Ears, and our Fathers have declared unto us, of the Li- the noble Works that thou didst in their day, and in the any. old time before them.* Upon which Consideration, our Church hath taught us to call upon God, *to arise, help and deliver us. For in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting Is a. 26. 4 Strength.* Which alone faileth not, and is the only sure Refuge for us to trust to. Who govern'd the World, and even our particular Concerns therein before we came into it; and will do the like when we are gone out of it. To whom we commit the Care of our selves and Posterity. Referring to him all present Dispositions, and future Events. Not doubting of his Capacity to help who liveth for ever. And resting assured to be heard, while we pray for the *Hallowing of his Name*, which hath been the standing Honour and wonder of all Ages; for the *Coming of his Kingdom*, whence nothing can de-  
Da throne



throned him; for the *Doing of his Will*, that is eternally Decreed; for our *Daily-Bread*, which hitherto hath extended to so great and many Necessities of all Ages; and for our Protection from *Temptations*, and *Deliverance from Evil*, that God hath rebuked from ever being able to destroy his Servants, tho' never so weak and hard put to it. And therefore, from the same Plea, we address God with the same Requests, and hope for the same Acceptance, that if we endeavour to be of the same Disposition, and Affections with the Saints of old, we shall be sure to obtain of God's hands, the same Mercy and Salvation; since, come when we will, God is; and hath *Kingdom, Power and Glory, for ever*; being no mortal *King*, nor fading *Power*, nor transient *Glory*; but all enduring longer than our Wants, even for ever and ever. Therefore,

*To thee, O our Father which art in Heaven, be the Glory of all thine own Perfections! And praised be thy Holy Name, for all our Mercies thence! Thine, O Lord, is the Kingdom over all the World; to whose Governance we thankfully submit, and on whose Protection we confidently depend. Thine is the Power, to do whatsoever it hath pleased thee both in Heaven and in Earth; Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own Strength, according to thy Promise and our Needs, to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. Thine is the Glory of Divine Excellency, and of gracious Works in us and for us, Thou art Good, and dost Good; arise, therefore, O Lord, help us and deliver us for thine Honour. And thou art the same God, Blessed for ever, who always livest to be adored by us, and to be good to us, and therefore, Under the Shadow of thy Wings will we make our Refuge, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength, World without end. Amen.*

S E R-

of the Ancients have bestowed an Exposition, who altogether omitted the *Doxology*; as also our own Church hath done, in this her Catechism, where it is not to be found. And tho' it be omitted by many Expositors. And tho' it be omitted by St. Luke, as we saw, yet being so for the same Reason (for which it hath been already observed) in the former Edition, and as it is in the new Edition, (as it not only is the same, but as a Seal of our

# SERMON XLIV.

## ON THE

### Conclusion of the LORD'S

### PRAYER.

Lord's own striking thereof. *Matth. vi. 13.*

## A M E N.

**H**AVING already considered the *Preface*, the *Peritions*, and the *Doxology* of the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Conclusion* now comes to be explain'd; being the fourth and last Part thereof, comprehended in this one word. Concerning which, also, it will be requisite to inquire and produce here what is generally received and profess'd in our Church concerning its *Authority*, its *Signification* and *proper Use*. In *The Authority* hereof, as a part of this Prayer, hath been no less question'd than the preceding *Doxology*, tho' upon seemingly less Reason: Because not only the Greek Copies of *St. Matthew's Gospel* are observed generally to have it; But even some of those which want the *Doxology*, have yet retained this *Conclusion*; on which some

of the Ancients have bestowed an Explication, who altogether omitted the *Doxology*; as also our own Church hath done, in this her *Catechism*, where we have it not only added to the Prayer, but explained afterwards in the following Summary Exposition. And tho' it be omitted by St. Luke, as well as the *Doxology* is, yet being so for the same Reason (for which it hath been already accounted) it therefore followeth not, but that it is an authentick Addition of our Saviour's; and as such, it is owned generally among Christians not only as the *Seal of our Lord's Prayer*, (as it hath been wont to be called) but as a *Seal of our Lord's own affixing thereto*!

*Its Signi-  
fication.*

II. *Its Signification* is manifestly varied according to the *Place* and *Nature* of the Discourse it is added to. For sometimes we find it *Perfixed* or set at the beginning of a Speech, and sometimes *Affixed* or added to the end thereof.

*Perfixed.*

I. *When it is Perfix'd*, or set at the beginning of a Speech it is always *Affertory*, according to the Primary Signification of the word, importing *Truth* and *Stability*; in which manner we find it very frequent in the Speeches of our Saviour through the *Gospels*; and doubled by St. John only, which by the other *Evangelists* is prefixed singly; and wheresoever our Saviour useth the word *Verily*, that is no other in the Language he spake than *Amen*; intending a vehement Assertion of some necessary Truth, to gain the more Attention and Belief thereto. For he being the *Truth it self*; who is therefore called the *Amen*, as being not only the faithful and true Witness, but even he in whom all the Promises of God are Yea and Amen; therefore when he came to publish the Gospel, which is that one Truth that should be in all

Jo. 14. 6.  
Rev. 3. 14.  
2 Cor. 1.  
20.



all the World, he changed the Stile, wherein all the Prophets before him were wont to speak, authorizing their Truths with, *Thus saith the Lord*, and spoke upon his own Authority, as the *God of Truth, Amen*; or *Verily I say unto you*, And, therefore, in the word, so peculiarly used by our Saviour, there is observed, these two things to be included, viz. 1. *The Truth spoken*, importing the undoubted certainty of the things delivered: And, 2. *The Truth speaking it*, admonishing us to consider that he that delivers it is the *Amen*, the *God of Truth, and Truth it self*. And for this Reason, it is also observed, that St. John, writing his Gospel the last of the Evangelists, and for the Perfection of the Sacred Story of our Saviour, having both opportunity and warrant to relate things omitted by the others, and also to explain some which they had simply related, or not expounded the full meaning of; therefore, to clear and express this double meaning which the single word, uttered by our Saviour and recorded by the other Evangelists, doth include, he doubleth the word *Amen*; not adding to what Christ spake, but explaining his Speech to the utmost extent in two words, which the others had only simply related in one; referring to the *Thing* spoken by one, *Amen*, and to the *Person* speaking it by the other *Amen*; St. John's *Amen, Amen, Verily verily*, being included in the other's single *Amen, Verily*; and Explicatory of what it intended, being so used by our Saviour. Which, though it have no relation to the Import of this word, as we are concern'd to consider it at present, where it doth not *Begin* but *Conclude* the matters in hand; yet may it not be impertinent or unuseful to have thus considered it, since even in this respect it

Doctor  
Light-  
foot 2d.  
Part of his  
Harmony.  
Sc. On  
Jo. i. 51.



belongeth to the Signification of the word to be explained, whereof our Lord is more peculiarly the Author, and may help us more profitably to understand what we so often read, to be spoken by him in the *Beginning*, as well as here at the *End* of his own words, where now it shall also be considered by us. And therefore,

*Affixed.*

2. When it is *Affixed*, or added to the end of a Discourse, its Signification is not only *Affertory* but *Preccatory*, as the matters discoursed of are the proper Object of our *Assent*, or of our *Affection*.

If the Discourse be the proper Object of our *Assent*, consisting only of pure and simple Truths, such as are delivered by way of *Affirmation* or *Negation*, then the *Amen* affixed to conclude it, betokens in a *Secondary* Signification of that Word, strictly an hearty Belief thereof, and Assent thereto; and may there be not unfitly rendered, where the Proposition is *Affirmative*, *So it is, hath been, or shall be*; and where it is a *Negative* one, *So it is not, hath not been, or shall not be*; and this is its Signification therefore at the end of our *Credo*. But,

If the Discourse be the Object of our *Affections*, consisting of such Truths as are also accompany'd with Goodness, then the *Amen* affixed betokens, (besides an Assent to them as true and Legitimate ones, being such as agree to those Rules by which they ought to be framed) an earnest *Wish* and *Desire*; which is observed to be the only Sense of the word in the Old Testament, and which the *Greek* expresses by *μωιτο*, and our *Catechism* by, *So be it*, and is the proper Conclusion of Prayer and Thanksgiving, according to its Signification at the end of the *Lord's Prayer*, importing a Request,

*Dr. Light-*  
*foot in*  
*the place*  
*afore said.*

Request, that it may be according to our Desires.

III. The proper Use therefore according to such *its Use.* Significations, of this word *Amen*, both as it concludes our Creed and this Prayer, (to both which it is affixed in the *Catechism* we are explaining.) will not be difficult to collect now for our Direction; obliging hence the Understanding, the Assent, Practices, Agreement, Interest, and Fervency, with respect to the Truths and Petitions ratified hereby. Therefore;

To whatsoever we are obliged to say [*Amen*] Obligerth  
we must be supposed to be obliged also to Understand, our Un-  
and be well acquainted with its Meaning and Truth; derstand-  
whether it be of an article in our Creed, or Pe- ing.  
tition or Praise in our Prayers. For our saying  
*Amen* at the End thereof doth interest us in the  
foregoing Speech, and suppose it to have been  
the very Sense of our Souls, which having duly  
weighed and considered we readily ratifie as soon  
as uttered; and it would be as absurd to say *Amen*  
to what is not understood, as to set our Seal to  
an Instrument of whose Contents we are igno-  
rant. This as it directly condemns the Practice  
of the Church of Rome, using her Divine Service  
in a Tongue altogether unknown to most, that  
are required to affix their *Amen* thereto; so it  
obligeth all *Christians* to learn not only the words  
but the Sense and true Meaning of their Creed  
and Prayers, to Capacitate themselves to say the  
*Amen* wherewith they are directed to conclude  
the Repetition thereof. Which St. Paul plainly  
intimateth, when he saith, *How shall he that oc- 1 Cor. 14.*  
*cupieth the room of of the unlearned, say Amen at thy* 16.  
*giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what*  
*thou sayst?* Hereby meaning that the saying *Amen*

doth oblige to understand what it is said to, and that it cannot properly be said to any thing in Ignorance, without great Absurdity; and much less to our Creed, which is a System of Fundamental Principles of Religion, without a competent understanding whereof no Man can possibly be truly Religious; or to this *Prayer* of our Lord's, which is proposed as a Pattern for our own, and comprehends all things needful to be desired by us, which while we are ignorant of, we cannot be Devout; nor say *Amen* to either without giving our selves the Lye, and serving God as with a Charm, rather than an Act of Divine Worship. And even this then may be one good reason to evince the Usefulness of Discourses of this Nature, explaining the Principles of Religion; which cannot be accounted Impertinent, since designed to prevent Men's Professions and Devotions from being so. And therefore it concerns the Ignorant to make more use thereof; by which Helps, and God's Blessing that is never wanting to succeed honest Endeavours in Divine Knowledge, they may arrive to a clear and lively Scence of the force of what they pretend to understand when they say *Amen*. Again,

*Belief.*

2. To whatsoever we are obliged to say [*Amen*] we must be supposed to be obliged firmly to Believe and Assent to both its Truth and Efficacy; that it both is as we profess it to be in our Creed, and that it also will be according to what we have truly desired in *Prayer*. That this is the use of *Amen* in our Creed needeth no illustration; since it can be no otherwise ratified by us; every *Article* whereof is therefore called our *Belief*, and whereof, making profession, at the Beginning, when we say *I believe, &c.* our Ratification or Sealing can only



only be referred thereto, at the End, when we say *Amen*. And though this Conclusion at the end of a *Prayer* is as was said, Principally *Pre-  
catory*; yet so far as such Prayer also necessarily includeth simple Truths, it must be no less *Af-  
sertory*; These being in truth, the Foundation of *That*, which cannot be offered with sincere Wishes or stedfast Faith of receiving the Benefit, unless we Assent to the Truth whether of our Petitions or Praises. Wherefore our Lord's prescribing us to put our *Amen* to this his *Prayer*, intendeth it as our Seal to the Truth, as well as note of our Affection and Desire of obtaining what he hath taught us thereby to ask. And therefore, saying *Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.* our *Amen* to it is a Declaration of our Belief, that he to whom we address our selves is a *Father*; that he is *our Father*; that he is *in Heaven*; that he hath a *Name*, and *Kingdom*, and *Will*, capable and meriting of being *Hallowed* and establish'd and obey'd; that on him we depend for *our Daily-Bread*; that we need of him the *Forgiveness* of our *Trespases*, which we are not to expect from him, unless we also do *forgive them that Trespas against us*; that we cannot of our selves withstand the assault of *Temptations*; that it is in God's Power, if he pleaseth, to *lead us into them*; yea, to suffer us to fall under them; and that he, and he alone, can, preserve or deliver us from them whose, therefore, is the *Kingdom and Power and Glory*, and shall be so *forever*. Which things unless we believe we cannot sincerely Desire; and saying *Amen* to them, we do acknowledge our Assent to the truth thereof; and for which having prayed, we do also thereby declare, that we confide that those Truths will be made good to us; and that



that it not only *is* as we have said, but *will be to us* as we have prayed; hereby *asking in Faith*,  
 Jam. 1.6. *nothing wavering*, according to St. James's Exhortation; and according to the Interpretation of our Catechism, signifying that *this we trust* God will do of his Mercy and Goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore we say Amen, so be it; and this also, as it should engage us all to an hearty Belief of all the Articles of our Creed, so to Pray always in Faith, without which the Amen will be impertinently used by us at the end of either. Yea, further,

Practice.

3. To whatsoever we are oblig'd to say [*Amen*] we must be suppos'd to be oblig'd to conform our Practice; without which no word can sufficiently ratifie either our Belief or Desires, being frustrated of their End, and null'd by Deed, what was confirm'd by Word. For the end of Faith and Prayer, is Practice; and what we profess to Believe, or pretend never so earnestly to Desire of God, is never effectually clos'd by our Amen till followed by suitable Endeavours; so that by saying That, we implicitly engage our selves to This. And therefore not to contradict or make void the Amen to be pronounced by us at the end either of our Creed or Prayers, we are engaged to make good in Deed what we thereby mean in Word; and to live Both, that we may be the better for Either. For as Faith without Works is dead, so Prayer without Endeavours will be ineffectual, the one not being more a necessary Effect of Assent, than the other is of Desire; and where then the Effect is not, the Cause must be concluded to be wanting; and consequently both unestablish'd by the Amen, which is not followed by Practice; without it Faith being Infidelity, and

Jam. 2.  
26.

and Devotion a lazy Phancy, and an idle Wish, whereby God is mocked, and our selves convicted out of our own mouths; there being no Apology for disregard to what we had Seal'd and Ratified with both our Assent and Desire. Moreover, *To whatsoever we are obliged to say [Amen] we must be supposed to be, in like manner, obliged to* *Interest.* *Concern our selves in it.* Hereby making our own, and applying to our selves, what before was in common, and proposed to all. For Truth and Grace are universal, wherein Property is made personal only by Application; for which Purpose we are taught to say thereto our *Amen*, without which we might otherwise be at a loss how to make out our Claim and Title to the benefit either of Truth to be believed, or Divine Grace, and Favours to be Desired. For Profession of the one, and Petition for the other, being sometimes uttered by the Mouth of another, we then have no other means of declaring that we joynt with him therein; but by thus subscribing thereto. And too often, even when we are rehearsing our Creed, or uttering our Prayers, in our own proper Persons, with our own mouths, (and especially in those comprehensive Summaries prescribed for our Belief in the *Apostles Creed*, and for our Devotion in our *Lord's Prayer*) we are not only necessarily unable, but apt to be interrupted and distracted in our Thoughts, to attend so severely to the full import of every Article or Petition as they are capable of: Which necessary Defect we have no other way of supplying, than by Summarily recollecting and appropriating, (as well what we attended to, as what we might slip, or could not reach) in our ratifying the full sense and meaning of

of all together, to our selves, at the end, by an *Amen*, as by our Hand and Seal thereto. And, therefore, that we may not supinely lose our share in any necessary Truth or good Request, for want of Claim, we have this Note of Ratification left and recommended to us as a most fit Conclusion of the Forms of our *Belief* and *Prayer*, whereby to declare the Concern and Interest we pretend or desire to have therein. And though, this is but once solemnly express'd, and that at the Close of all the *Creed* and this *Prayer*, yet is it intended to be carried throughout every distinct part in both, and to be implicitly affixed to the end of every particular *Article* and *Petition*? It not being fit that any Fundamental Truth, or necessary Request should pass unseal'd by us, or want our *Amen*, which yet it may suffice to express once, in a more solemn and explicit Declaration at the end of all: Whereby we do, as it were, briefly and succinctly rehearse or pray over again, all that we had uttered before; and, in one word signify our Belief or Desires, in all that had been before profess'd or begg'd.

Unanimi-  
ty.

5. To whatsoever we are obliged to say [*Amen*] we must be supposed to be obliged to Unanimity and Consent; whereof this is a Declaration; as it is not only the same Form of Ratification, by one word in divers Mouths, but affix'd to the same Truths and Requests, enforced by the common Suffrage, and uniting the common Interest of all together, to the Advancement of God's Glory, the Beauty of Holiness, the Peace of the Church, and Mutual Charity, and Edification of one another. And, surely, were this more seriously, either considered, or remembred, so many would not

not with-hold or smuggle their *Amen* to Truths not to be denied, and to Prayers never reasonably found fault with in our Publick Worship, but would be sure to joyn their Devotion hereby to the Publick, as affraid to be excluded, and desirous to contribute to the *Glorifying of God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with one Mind, Rom. 15; and one Mouth.* The which that it may succeed acceptably, let it also be added, That,

6. Lastly, *To whatsoever we are obliged to say [Amen] we must be supposed also, to be obliged to a fervent Zeal and Affection for it.* Because it being the Note as was observed, of our *Assent and Desire* [that so it is, and so we would have it be,] we cannot use it pertinently without Zeal; testifying our Sincerity in those Acts, and rendering them acceptable parts of Divine Worship. And therefore it is not a Bashful, Cold, Heedless, Formal or Infrequent use of the Word that can answer its intent; but a Resolute, Bold, Considerate, Warm, Constant, and audible Pronunciation thereof; as Sealing and Ratifying that whereby we mean to stand, and do resolve to be concluded, without ever foregoing, come on't what will, either in part or whole of what we have been taught, either to Profess in our *Credo*, or beg in this *Prayer*. And because hereby we draw to a Conclusion in both; therefore herein, according to the Nature of Motion which is always most forcible in the End, ought we to put forth the Efficacy of our Faith and Desires, and recollect as it were, all our foregoing Fervency and Affections into our *Amen*, wherewith we may wing and dart our Devotions into Heaven, and go out of God's Presence with a sweet Savour and



and Relish of, and a renewed Confidence in his Mercy and Power, leaving behind us this Testimony of the Strength of our Faith, and Ardency of our Affections towards Divine Truths and Blessings.

Such is the Proper Use of this Conclusive Particle; according whereto Custom hath prevailed in the Church of God in all Ages; and for the Observation whereof may be produced, both the Prescription of Antiquity, and the Records of Scripture. The Jews are observed to have been very punctual and frequent in their Use hereof, at the end of their Hymns and every little Prayer; and it is particularly enjoined by one of their inspired Prophets, that at the Blessing of the Lord God of Israel, all the People should say Amen; and which according to the Ardency of Zeal, we find it to be doubled; *Amen and Amen*; and therefore at Ezra's Blessing the Lord, when he publicly read in the Law we read, that it was so done with lifting up also the Hands; as agreeable to the devoutest Acts of Adoration.

Pf. 106.

48.

--41. 13.

--72. 19.

Neh. 8.6.

Hebr. 5

Talm. Ex-

ercitat. on

1 Cor. 14.

16.

Wherefore in their Talmud are reproved three particular sorts of Amen, (which Dr. Hammond takes notice of in his Notes on this word, in his Annotations on the New Testament) the First they call *Pupillum*, which Dr. Lightfoot translates the *Orphan Amen*, when like Children they affix'd it to that they understood not. The Second is called *Surreptitium*, the *Snatched* or *Stolen Amen*, when through inadvertency it came out before its time, before the Prayer was done. And the Third they term'd *Scissile*, the *divided Amen*, when through drowsie Indisposedness they cut it in two parts. By which Curiosity of Division,

how-

however little it may recommend the Gravity of their Wisdom, yet it shews the regard they had to the reverend Use belonging hereto. From the Jews our Lord took the word, and by placing it at the end of his own Prayer, hath sufficiently intimated the continuance of its Use in Christian Worship also. Accordingly, in his Apostles time, <sup>i Cor. 14.</sup> its Use, we find, vindicated and its Right re-<sup>16.</sup> scued from being lost to the Ignorant, who was able no other way to joyn in the Devotion of others. And among the purest of the Primitive Christians, it is recorded to have been uttered with such Unanimity and Affection, in their Publick Assemblies, that their Churches were wont to Echo and Ring with their Amen, the Sound whereof they likened to the Fall of Waters, or the noise of Thunder. Which, surely, nothing but the want of Primitive Zeal and Unanimity, could ever have silenced to that degree of bashful Stillness, it is generally reduced to in our Congregations now-a-days; where it is either not uttered or not heard, worthy of the Devotions, to which it is required.

That, therefore, our Silence may not be took for Dislike thereto; and God justly refuse to accept as our's, what is refused to be consented to, or own'd hereby; it will concern all to contribute to the revival of, and to vindicate to its proper Use, this so meet an Help, and venerable an Ornament of Divine Worship; which being confirmed by our Amen, and so many Suffrages on Earth, may be more likely to be confirmed by the Amen, also, of Our Father which is in Heaven.

Be it, therefore, Blessed Lord, according to  
thy Word, and these our Requests ! Which  
(upon the most mature Consideration, in  
steadfast Faith, together with our sincere  
Endeavours, as the very Sense of our own  
Souls, in Union with thy Catholick Church,  
with hearty Resolutions, to stand and be  
concluded hereby) we devoutly lay be-  
fore and leave with thee, (not as the Pro-  
duct of our own Imaginations and weak  
Judgments, but) after the Pattern, and  
in the very words of thy Well-Beloved Son,  
who best knew thy Will and our Needs,  
and hath taught us, when we pray, to say,  
Our Father, &c.

That therefore, our Silence may not be took  
for Dislike thereto ; and God highly respect  
accept as ours, what is refused to be considered  
of our own Hierarchy ; it will concern all to con-  
tribute to the revival of, and to vindicate to its  
proper Use, this to meet an Help, and ven-  
erable Ornament of Divine Worship ; which  
being confirmed by our Aids, and so many  
Advantages on Parish, may be more likely to be  
confirmed by the Aids, also, of Our Father which

SER-

# SERMON XLV.

## ON THE

# SACRAMENTS.

Matth. xxviii. 19.

*Go ye, therefore, and teach all Nations; Baptizing them—*

**T**HESE Words contain our Saviour's Commission to his Disciples for the gathering of him a Church, and making some out of all Nations Christians; both commanding their Admission, and prescribing the Manner of it.

1. The Admission of Profelytes out of all Nations is commanded in these Words; *Go ye, therefore, and teach* [the word μαθητεύσατε, here translated *Teach ye*, importing not only *Instruction*, but properly in this place *Admission*, Discipling or making Scholars, and Followers of Christ,] entering them into, and training them up in his Doctrine and Service. And therefore their Commission for *Teaching*, which is a distinct Duty and necessary for such as shall be admitted Christ's Disciples, is particularly prescribed in the Verse following the Text, as a distinct and properly succeeding

E e



ceeding Work, answering the end of such *Admission*: Men being therefore to be *Discipled*, or admitted into Society with *Christian Members*, that they may receive *Instruction*, and be *Taught* the *Christian Profession*; as Men are first listed *Soldiers* in order to learn the *Military Art*.

2. The manner of *Admission* here prescribed is *Baptism*. By which only our *Saviour* Commis-  
sions his Followers to admit any into their Fellowship as his *Disciples*, as by a distinguishing Rite of their Profession, instituted by himself, and made necessary to their Disciple ship.

Which, therefore, being plainly a *Ceremony* (tho' not the only one) incorporated into the *Christian Religion*, and made by *Christ*, the Author himself, a necessary part thereof, it affords us just ground and occasion to consider, in the method wherein the *Catechism* we are explaining, doth instruct us, concerning the further means of *Christianity*, which are the *Sacraments* (as Rites so instituted are called) in *General*, before we discourse thereof in *Particular*. Whereof this of *Baptism* is necessarily the *First*, as being the initiating Rite appointed for the [*Discipling*] all *Nations* to *Christ*.

The Sacra-  
ments in  
General.

Concerning which I shall inquire after the *Name*, *Meaning*, *Parts*, *Efficacy*, *Necessity* and *Number* of such Religious Ceremonies, whereby we may fully understand all that our *Catechism* requires an account of from us, and all that is necessary for us to know concerning them.

Name.

1. The *Name* whereby we are taught to distinguish them, is that of *Sacraments*. Which tho' not given by our *Saviour*, nor to be found in our *Bibles*, yet is it an ancient *Name* applied thereto.

thereto. Taken (as 'tis generally observed) from its Use among the *Romans*, signifying, in *General*, something esteemed Sacred; and, in *Particular*, these *Three* several things.

1. A *Pawn* or *Pledge* deposited by the Party impleaded in Law, to bind him to answer and make good the Action upon the Peril of forfeiting so much Money.

2. The *Military Oath*, by which their Soldiers were sworn to their Colours, or Officers for assuring their Fidelity and Courage. And

3. A *Token* or *Badge*, by which Soldiers were distinguished according to the Commanders they were sworn to.

And in all these Sences some have thought this Word very proper to denote those Sacred Ceremonies used in the Christian Service; and more especially those *Two* of *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*, these being *Federal Rites*, and in a particular manner instituted by Christ himself; called in a Way of Eminency *Sacraments*; where, in God, when we sue to him upon his Promise doth by *External and Visible Signs*, assure us of his Grace and Mercy, as by an *Holy Pawn*; and we, as by a solemn *Oath*, do thereby engage our selves to become the faithful *Soldiers and Servants of Christ*, the Captain of our Salvation, unto our *Lives end*; and are also to be distinguished by these *Marks*, as the *Badge* of our Profession, from all Societies of Men that are not Christian.

And yet by this Word the ancient Translators of the *Bible* (as is observed) did usually render the Word *μυστήριον*. [*Mystery*] which signified some religious Action that is of secret or deeper Meaning and Design than is obvious to ordinary Perception. Whereupon the ancient Writers, also, term

every thing a *Sacrament* that is a Secret, and Divine, proposed in Signs and Types, and containing under it somewhat of abstruse Meaning: So that the Word being of so large, ambiguous and indeterminate a Signification, no more ought to be insisted upon from it, than what is intended by the things it is applied to. And therefore we are taught

*Meaning.* II. *The Meaning* this word *Sacrament* is applied to; being determined to signify *an outward and visible Sign of an inward and spiritual Grace given to Us, ordained by Christ himself; as a Means whereby we receive the same, and a Pledge to assure us thereof.* Wherein there are *Six* things implied to be necessary for the constituting any religious Ceremony, a proper *Christian Sacrament.*

1. *There must be an outward and visible Sign.* [Outward and Visible it must be] to difference a *Sacrament* from other religious Acts of Worship, which are only *Acts* of the *Mind* declared by Words or Gestures; whereas this requires the application also of Matter to be joyned therewith as Essential thereto. And it must be [a *Sign*] intending some Representation of the Concernments between God and us, both as to what he obligeth himself to confer, and what we make Profession of Performing, and be Significative beyond what other common Rites and Ceremonies in publick Worship are; being, though a Ceremony, yet more than a bare Ceremony, or simple Act of religious Service; importing and denoting something visible and discernible after a Symbolical manner, as it were an *Hieroglyphick* of the *New Covenant.* Therefore is it Essential to a *Sacrament* that something *Outward and Visible* be made a Significative Token or Sign, even



2. *Of an inward and Spiritual Grace.* Something *Inward* it must be ; because otherwise it would stand in need of no *Outward* Representation, being it self *Visible*. And *Spiritual* it necessarily is, as relating to spiritual Concerns between God and us, conducing to the welfare of our inward Man, and made part of a spiritual *Service*, for spiritual Ends and Improvements. And a *Grace* 'tis call'd, a *Sign* of ; because the Divine Blessings, and Privileges of the *New-Covenant*, (such as Pardon of Sin, God's Reconciliation or favourable Acceptance of us, and Strength to do what God requireth from us) are conveyed by it. Which is

3. *Given to us.* Being, out of Good-will, without our Desert or Procurement, freely annexed to the Observation of such a *Rite*, or due Use of the outward and visible *Signs* thereof, by virtue of some Divine Promise : Being,

4. *Ordained by Christ himself.* [*Ordained*] it must be by *Command* and *Promise* to determine its Signification and Efficacy ; which otherwise could never have been suggested by the proper force of the *Sign* its self, having no natural Aptitude, either for the *Conveyance* or *Assurance* of Divine *Grace* signified thereby. And which only *Christ* himself could institute ; being the only *Mediatour* of the *New-Covenant*, to which it is related, and by virtue of whose Death all Grace is only promised, he by his own immediate Authority consecrating the Nature of the Elements, by setting them himself apart, and Commissionating others, in his stead and Name, to do in like manner, for the same End and Purposes assigned by him ; Even,

5. *As a Means whereby we receive the same :* It being intended to be both the *Instrument* and the



Condition of the Graces and Blessings of the *New-Covenant*. Such Divinely instituted Ceremonies, are the appointed *Means* of Conveyance thereof from God by Christ, to them who *Receive* and rightly esteem and use them ; which is the Condition required to make us capable of the Benefits thereof, and whereby we are actually made Partakers of them. The Covenant being struck, and our Consent and Resolution declared by our Reception. And therefore also this is,

6. Lastly, *As a Pledge to assure us thereof* ; being delivered to, and accepted of by us from God, by the hand of his Minister as a *Pawn* or present *Earnest* of what is promised, wherewith we receive Part, and assurance of the Rest to perfect us in due time, upon the Conditions we have obliged our selves, and agreed to hereby. And this therefore we receive as a ground of Confidence and *Acquiescence* in God, and a *Seal* to oblige *Fidelity* to him in our selves.

From all which it appears, that a *Sacrament* is a Federal Christian Rite, accompanied by Divine Grace and Benediction, being instituted by Christ to unite us to himself and to his Church. From which general Consideration of the meaning of this Word *Sacrament*, proceed we now, for our further Instruction herein (because our *Catechism* also does so) to inquire more particularly, though briefly, concerning,

*Parts.*

III. *The Parts which there are in a Sacrament* ; reduced to these Two, viz, The *Outward visible Sign*, and the *Inward spiritual Grace*.

*Outward.*

1. *The Outward visible Sign*, whereby God condescends to make known to us, by things we can understand, what through our Ignorance we cannot apprehend ; stooping to our weak and gross apprehen-

apprehension, and making a visible and familiar thing to be the *Sign*, and Memorial, and Representation of a Mysterious and *Spiritual Grace*. In Mercy hereby sanctifying to us the Benefit of *Fancy*, which is naturally a *Medium*, and an effectual Instrument of Action; and allowing us the advantage of visible Objects, which are apt strongly to affect the Mind, especially of the weak and vulgar, being consecrated in fit measure, and to good Purposes; that our *Faith* might be confirm'd, our *Devotion* rais'd, and *Resolutions* quickned hereby, to obey God's Will in the Practice of those great Duties he hath required of us.

2. *The Inward and Spiritual Grace.* Whereby *Inward*. God hath elevated obvious and *Outward Signs* to an Efficacy far above their Natures, and designed them not for the Amusement of *Fancy* with empty Shews, nor for the Engagement of *Endeavours* in fruitless Performances, but for the Perfection of *Human Nature*, and Production of true *Glory to God*, and solid *Benefit* to our selves, in rendring us truly Good, and like unto himself, both in interior Disposition of Mind, and exterior Practice of Works agreeable to Reason, and of Substantial Duty, for our Qualification for that State of Happiness, both promised and tendered hereby.

So that, being duely received, both Parts of the *Sacrament* will go together, and our *Sight* assisting our *Faith*, as an Instrument of Righteousness, convey and confirm to us all the Blessings of the *New Covenant*. And as certainly as we receive the *Outward and visible Sign*; so surely shall we receive the *Inward and Spiritual Grace*, to our present Supply and future Perfection. And this now doth engage us to consider, as was proposed,

Efficacy.

IV. *The Efficacy of a Sacrament.* Concerning which, we are to believe, *That it is Effectual*, and ought to be understood *How, or in what Manner it is so*, for the Purposes intended by its Institution.

Proved.

1. *That a Sacrament is effectual*, and intended for more than a meer Ceremony only to maintain Order and Unity in the Church of Christ, is evident from its being an *instituted Means*, of conveying Divine Graces to the well-disposed Receivers thereof, and from the *Scriptures* attributing such Effects thereto as are the immediate Issues of those Graces which are signified thereby: Even

Acts 22.

16.

1 Cor. 10.

16.

*the washing away of Sins by Baptism*, and the *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ by the Lord's Supper*. By a right Participation whereof are conveyed and assured those spiritual Advantages of the *New Covenant*, for obtaining whereof there is no other determin'd way, which are no otherwise to be ordinarily had, and never failing to be hereby procured, if our own Indisposedness hinder not. And therefore it is further to be understood.

Described.

2. *How, or in what Manner a Sacrament is Efficacious to convey Grace.* About which there being some Controversie, that we may conceive Orthodoxly, we must believe that it is so, neither *Physically* nor yet *Uncertainly*, either so as to operate without our own Concurrence, or so as to depend on the *Worthiness* or *Intention* of the Person that administers it.

Not Physically.

1. *Not Physically.* As if any Sacrament did *Actually* and *Infalibly* confer those Graces, for which they are a *Means* fitted by Christ, and that the *Application* of them were a *Disposition* sufficient to give them their *Virtue*. Which is called the *Opus operatum*,



*operatum*, whereby holy Dispositions are super-  
 seded, and the Vitals of Religion corrupted, and  
 the Doctrine and Practice of *Charms* introduced  
 into the *Christian* Religion, and its main Design  
 quite overthrown. And therefore, That which  
 gives a Sacrament its Efficacy is the *Opus operantis*,  
 it becoming acceptable to God with regard only  
 to the Temper, and the inward Acts of the Per-  
 son to whom it is applyed; imparting its Virtue  
 in a *Moral* way; and becoming a *Means and Pledge*  
*of Grace* only to the worthy Receivers thereof;  
 according to what our *Church* professes in one of  
 her Thirty nine *Articles* concerning the *Sacraments*  
 in these words. viz. "That in such only as worthi-  
 ly receive the same, they have a wholsom Effect or  
 Operation; but they that receive them unworthily  
 purchase to themselves Damnation, as St. Paul  
 saith. Which condemns the Practice of the *Church*  
 of *Rome*, that administers them in the last Agony,  
 when Men are past Sense, and incapable to re-  
 ceive with Faith, by which alone a Sacrament ju-  
 stifies. And tho' we administer *Baptism* to In-  
 fants before they arrive to Sense, and a Capacity  
 to act Faith, yet the Wills of such being by the  
 Law of Nature, and Nations in their Parents,  
 and transferred by them to their Sureties, the  
 Profession thereof made in their behalf is con-  
 sidered as made by themselves, Which when they come  
 to Age they are bound to make good. Wherefore  
*Baptism* is by St. Peter said to save us, not as it is  
 a Sacramental Sign, by any inherent Virtue in  
 the words of its Institution pronounced there-  
 with, Not the putting away the filth of the Flesh, but  
 the Answer of a Good Conscience towards God, without  
 which its Efficacy is lost. And St. Paul's Com-  
 mand is, Let a Man examine himself, and so let  
 him

Artic. 25.

1 Cor. 11.  
29.1 Pet. 3.  
21.



him eat of the Lord's Supper : None of God's Ordinances effecting any thing to our advantage, or their Design without our own Concurrence therewith ; which, though they be the *Ordained Means* of Grace, do or do not prove so, actually, in the event, just as they are received and applied by us. Yet (as was said,)

Not Uncertain.

2. *Not Uncertainly* ; so as to suspend their Effect upon either the *Unworthiness* or *Intention* of the Person who administred. They being God's and not Man's Ordinances, neither to be made *Better* or *Worse* by the hand they are delivered by to us from God. So then, as the *Apostle* argueth, *Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.*

1 Cor. 3.  
7.

Depend-  
ing ne i  
ther on  
the Wor-  
thiness.

For, As to the *Unworthiness* of the Person administering ; unless his Crimes are open and scandalous, it is great *Uncharitableness* to Judge and Condemn him ; and if they are, it is great *Impiety* to reject the *Sacraments* hereupon ; since they are standing Appointments in the Church, whereby God can work his own Will effectually, by whomsoever they are administred. And though God may reject what a scandalous Person does in his Service, as a *Private Christian* ; yet there is no reason to suspect he will not own his own Ordinances wherein such are concern'd, as *Ministers* and *Publick Officers* in his Church. Because such do not officiate in their own Name, nor does the Virtue of the Ordinance depend upon their *Goodness* but God's *Promise*. It is the *Sacrament* of the Lord, and not the *Person* of the Dispenser thai we expect Benefit and Grace by. And if *Communicants* be worthy themselves, God will accept them under the worst *Ministry* ; whose Service,

Service, the Administration neither of an *Angel* from Heaven, nor of *Christ* himself can recommend, if themselves are unworthy. Besides, that if the Efficacy of the *Sacraments* depended upon the *Worthiness* of the Person administering, it would be as Uncertain whether any shall benefit thereby, as it is impossible always to resolve, who are truly worthy. And therefore however it were to be wish'd, that all who administer about Holy things, were themselves Holy; yet can their being otherwise no way alter the Nature of what is so, to such as are holily Disposed for them. And,

As to the *Intention* of the Person administering; Nor Intention though the *Papists* say, That if a *Priest* hath a *Intention* of the secret *Intention* not to make a *Sacrament*, in that *Administrator*. Case no *Sacrament* is made, though *Consecrated* by him; whose *Intention*, they teach, is necessary to the *Essence* thereof, without which it cannot be administered; yet this, being plainly what is neither to be known nor prevented, must necessarily draw after it such a Chain of Absurdities as might evacuate the very Being of a *Church*, the Credit of the *Christian Religion*, and all *Peace* and *Quiet* in the Minds of Men; and which doth not more intend the unreasonable extolling the *Authority* of him that Administers, than impiously effect the deadning the *Devotion* of all that receive the *Sacraments*.

The Efficacy, therefore, hereof however *Necessary*, is yet conveyed neither *Naturally*, nor *Uncertainly* hereby; but as they are the Ordained *Means* and *Pledges* of *Grace*; so are they such to all that worthily partake of the same, notwithstanding the *Unworthiness* or *Intention* of him that may Administer them. To encourage, therefore,  
En-

Endeavours in the Use hereof ; 'tis requisite that we consider also,

*Necessity.*

V. *The Necessity of Sacraments* : Whereof our *Catechism* instructs us, having taught us to say, That they are *Generally necessary to Salvation*; which implies these *Four* things. 1. That the use of *Sacraments* be received as well as any other Divine Ordinance in the *Church of Christ*. 2. That when they may be had, they are not to be neglected any more than other means of Divine Grace and *Salvation*. 3. That when they are neglected a certain Sin is committed ; and, 4. That Grace and *Salvation* are not ordinarily, to be expected or hoped for, though in the use of whatever other Means thereof, without the due use of *Sacraments* also.

*To be used.*

1. *The use of Sacraments is to be received as well as any other Divine Ordinance in the Church of Christ* ; being of equal *Authority* and *Benefit* therewith ; being Commanded by Christ, and intended to be Means of Grace and *Salvation* to us. And, therefore, it is well observed that the very same Arguments alledged against their Use, equally overthrow all external Acts of Worship whatsoever ; which yet are admitted by those who reject the *Sacraments*. For supposing (according to the arguings of the *Quakers*) that the *Christian* Religion is necessarily so Spiritual, as in no Case to admit of any *Outward and Visible Signs* ; and that the Continuance thereof is a *Fundament* of the *Spiritual Evangelical* Worship (as they say it is, ) and that *Christ* who came to abolish those shadows of the *Jews*, can by no means be thought to institute these visible Signs for *Christians* ; who changed not only the particular Ordinances, but the very Nature thereof ; not because

cause they were *Jewish* Meats and Drinks, and divers Washings, but because they were at all such things; which are not of the Nature of the *Gospel*; and are superseded by the Coming of *Christ*, the Substance of all such Tokens; supposing, I say, this, it must necessarily condemn also all outward Teachings and the use of good Books, yea and of the Holy Scriptures themselves; all which have yet there Use, when duely used, on a spiritual Account. For, as Words signifie and hold forth *Christ*, and the Inward and Spiritual Benefits, that Believers have by him to the outward Hearing, so do the *Sacraments* to their Sight and Feeling; and which therefore were called *Verbum Visibile*; [the Visible Word] God having so appointed it, in his infinite Wisdom, that the Knowledge of Divine and Spiritual things, should after a sort be given to us by outward Signs and Symbols that affect our Senses, being let into our Souls through those natural Passages to awaken and assist through the Inward Operation of the Holy Spirit, the inward Faculties to apprehend spiritual things by Elementary Emblems. Therefore in all Institutions of Religion, since the beginning of the World, there have been outward Signs; and we Mortals can neither Think, nor speak, nor Act without the use of Signs; so that a *Gospel* without Signs would be useless to us. And as there were Signs and Types under the *Law* to foreshew *Christ* coming in the *Flesh*, and his Sacrifice upon the Cross, which are abolished and ceased by being already fulfilled; so *Christ* hath appointed other Signs and Types under the *Gospel*, in Remembrance of his having been in the World, and to foreshew his *Second Coming* to judge the World, which are also to continue till they are



are fulfilled, even as long as the Remembrance of that which they represent, ought to last with us, and he shall be personally present with us again. Though therefore our Saviour in his new Dispensation, has eased us of that *Law of Ordinances*, that *grievous Yoke*, and those *beggarly Elements* which were laid upon the *Jews*: Yet, since we are still in the Body, subject to our Senses, and to sensible things, he hath appointed some Federal Actions, to be both the visible *Stipulations* and *Profession* of our *Christianity*, and the Conveyances to us of the Blessings of the *Gospel*. And through an ignorant Presumption, to throw away the *Outward and visible Signs*, is really to lose the *Inward and Spiritual Graces* of the *Christian Religion* signified thereby, and to Spiritualize away its Substance, into a meer Shadow and vain Imagination. By which means, some who had been once very zealous in the *Quakers* way have been observed to forbear their Meetings, refuse all outward Teaching, and deny to joyn in any External Act of Worship; alledging all was Inward, and they needed no outward thing, who were to *Worship God in Spirit*. Which are, indeed, true and proper Consequences of their own Reasonings against the use of *Outward Signs* in Spiritual Worship, which being, as it were, the Body of Religion, without them it must necessarily soon disappear.

Rom. 12.

1.  
Author of  
the Snake  
in the  
Grass.

Whence our Corporeal Service, thereby is called our *Reasonable Service*: And whoever goes about (as one says) to separate the Bodily from the Spiritual Worship, doth as much murder Religion, as he that should separate a Man's Soul from his Body. So necessary a part of Religion is the Use of Sacraments. Therefore, further

2. They

2. *They are not to be Neglected, when they can be had, any more than any other Means of Grace and Salvation.* And this is the import of their being said, in our *Catechism*, to be *Generally Necessary*. They not being so absolutely necessary, as that Persons not receiving them (where through *Persecution* or *Death*, they cannot possibly ; or, where they being not rightly administred, they are not safely to be received) should despair of Grace and fail of Salvation ; since God without them can make use of other Means, and did accept of *Cornelius*, and save the *Thief* upon the Cross, and dispense with the *Israelites* Omission of *Circumcision* in the Wilderness, though strictly Commanded ; supplying some other way, the want of what is not had without our Fault ; being pleased to have *Mercy* rather than *Sacrifice* ; and accepting those who earnestly desire, and are disposed to receive them, if they could. Yet, they are so *Necessary*, as that they ought never to be *Wilfully* neglected ; and to the Use whereof we are as much obliged as to any other Divine Ordinance, which nothing but invincible Necessity can dispense with ; and we may as well expect to be *Sanctified* without attending on the *Word* and *Prayer* ; and to be *Saved* without *Faith* and *Repentance*, as to obtain either without receiving the *Sacraments*, which are no less Divinely instituted Means of both, when they may be duly had. And, therefore, though some have been, and others may be *Sanctified* and *Saved* without them, who cannot have them, yet they are so Necessary, moreover, that

3. *When they are Neglected it is Sin.* Because they are Commanded and grounded upon the very same Authority as any other matter of Du-

Not to be  
Neglected.

The Neg-  
lect where-  
of is Sin.

ty

ty is; an Omission whereof reflects upon the Majesty and Wisdom of their Author, whose *Laws* are equally to be obeyed in every Instance, and cannot be dispens'd with in *this*, without Guilt equal to the worst of Sins, expressly said to exclude the Kingdom of Heaven. So that the *Sacraments* are as *necessary to Salvation*, as our avoiding Guilt is; and wilful Neglecters of this Duty have no more Reason to presume upon Divine Mercy, while they continue such, than any other Sinners have, whom *God will not accept*, and whose very *Prayers* are said to be *Abomination to him*. And, therefore, such their Necessity implies, finally, that

Prov. 28.  
9.

Neither  
Grace nor  
Salvation,  
certain  
without  
them.

4. *Grace and Salvation are not to be hoped for, or with any Confidence to be depended on, though in the Use of what-ever other Means thereof without them.* For the Use of these Ordinances being positively commanded by God, a wilful Neglect thereof must consequently, not only despoil us of his Favour, but expose us also to his Wrath and Vengeance; and being, moreover, Comanded by him as a *Means of Grace and Salvation*, he must be supposed to declare hereby, that he will not *Sanctifie* or *Save* without them. For, tho' there be other Means prescribed by God for the same Purpose, such as *Prayer* and Attendance on his *Word*, yet as they are not represented to us as sufficient of themselves alone; so can no Means be presumed to be sufficient to such who despise the Authority and Wisdom of the Imposer by their Neglect of any prescribed Means whatsoever. All being no more than what is sufficient together. Whereof none are to be Neglected, since all are enjoined. All tending to one and the same End, but operating several ways,

ways, according to their several Natures, towards it. The good Effect proper to one, not being to be expected by us from another, while that is neglected. And tho' God can convey his Grace effectually by whatever Means, or without any instituted Means, into the Hearts of Men; yet is not this Ordinary, nor to be depended on; having no Promise whereon to ground an Assurance. And God who may annex his Blessings to what Conditions he pleaseth, having made the *Sacraments* a standing Means of obtaining them, doth plainly necessitate our Use of them for that end, as much as of any other Means; without which, where they can be had, no other Means can be presum'd to be sufficient. Yea, and the greater Compassion God sheweth to those sincere Persons who want his *Sacraments*, by reason of their *Infelicity* not their *Choice*, the greater will be his indignation against those Hypocrites, who willfully neglect or contemn what his adorable Love and Wisdom hath ordained to be throughout his whole Church, used and revered.

So *Generally Necessary*, in all the Respects, is the use of *Sacraments* for *Salvation*. Which are no *Needless* or *Indifferent* Ceremonies to be observed or let alone, as Men's Humors and Fancies shall incline them. But are *Instituted* Parts of Religious Worship, to the Observation whereof all are indispensibly bound, as the Condition of *Grace* and *Salvation*, not to be Neglected upon less Peril than of *Everlasting Ruin*. Which were it more believed and considered by some Men, would obliged them to treat these Sacred Rites otherwise than they do; and engage their Zeal and Fidelity for what they are chiefly to distinguish themselves by from *Jews* and *Pagans*. Concerning

F f      which,



which, also, that we may not err, we are to consider what we are further taught.

Number  
of Sacra-  
ments.

VI. Lastly, *The Number of the Sacraments.* Whereof, tho' only *One* is mention'd in our Text; yet *Two* are said to be *Generally necessary to Salvation* in our *Catechism*; That is to say, *Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.* Besides which, tho' there, confessedly, may be many other things so called, according to a larger Sence of the Word, wherein every Holy Rite is a *Sacrament*; yet in the common Ecclesiastical Use thereof, that Name belongeth properly to none other, besides these two Actions; which therefore we are taught only to own as such; as being all that have been so *received anciently* in the Church; all that are *Necessary*, and all that are exactly *agreeable to the Characters*, or have all the Properties belonging to a true and proper *Sacrament*.

Two only  
anciently  
received.

1: That only these *Two* have been *anciently received* in the Church of Christ, we are assured by constant Testimony acknowledging no more, and by the *Novelty* of the Addition increasing their number: It not being till the *Twelfth Century*, that the *Sacraments* were reckon'd to be *Seven*, and not till the *Fifteenth*, that their number was so establish'd by any *Council.* Arising first (as the account is given) from a Conceit of the *seven-fold Operation of the Spirit*, from that Mystical Expression of the *seven Spirits of God*, whereof *Seven Sacraments* was fancied to be a good Illustration, though a groundless, and (of a long time) unthought of Allusion.

Bishop of  
Sarum's  
Expos. on  
Artic. 25.  
Rev. 1. 4.  
4. 5.

Two only  
necessary.

2. That only these *Two* are *Necessary*, is apparent from their Sufficiency, to answer all the necessary Uses of all *Christians*, which are but *Two* viz. Their *Admission into the Church of Christ* out of

of which there is no Promise of *Salvation*, and for which *Baptism* is appointed; and their continuing true Members thereof, in *Communion* with the Church, and *Participation* of that Grace, which by *Baptism* they had the Promise of, and for which the *Lord's Supper* is ordained to be a *Testimony* and *Means*. And as then in the Bodily Life we need no more but to be *Born* and then *Nourished*, so our *New Birth* in Christ being represented by *Baptism*, and our *Nourishment* afterwards provided for in the *Lord's Supper*, there can be no real need of any other *Sacraments*. And accordingly in the *Jewish Church* God did, in a standing and ordinary Manner, provide for these two Purposes only, by the Institution of those Two Ordinances of *Circumcision*, to which our *Baptism* answers, and is therefore called the *Circumcision of Christ*, made without hands; and the *Passover*, to which the *Lord's Supper* bears Proportion, and thereupon Christ said to be our *Pass-*  
*over, sacrificed for us.* And, Col. 2. 11.  
1 Cor. 5.  
7.

3. Lastly, That only these Two are exactly agreeable to the Characters, or have all the Properties belonging to a true Christian Sacrament, will be made manifest, from a Particular brief Consideration of those other Actions, making equal Pretensions thereunto. Two only have all the Properties of a Sacrament.

That these two Holy Rites of *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper* are Proper Sacraments, is not question'd by any that own any Sacrament at all. And even by them who establish more, it is confessed, that these are so far the Principal, that what their greatest Doctors have voluntarily said of them, falleth very little short of what we assert, either of their *Necessity* or *Sufficiency*. And therefore by their own Confession, there are no more

more like unto these Two; nor according to their own Concession ought there to be any more received as *Sacraments* with them, being defective in any thing Essential to a true *Sacrament*. For which Reason we reject,

*Confirmation*, Tho' not as to the Thing it self, being an Apostolical Institution, and of singular Use to those who were *Baptized* in their Infancy; yet dare we not own or use it as a proper *Sacrament*, because not appearing to be the Institution of *Christ* himself, and denied to be *Divine* even by many of great Note in the *Roman Church*, and the *Holy See* it self. And, as it was at first, and still is in our Church, administered by the *Imposition of Hands* (which is only a Gesture in Prayer) it wants an *Outward and Visible Sign* to which an *Inward and Spiritual Grace* may be supposed to have been annexed. Which, though the *Chrism* [or anointing with Oly] in the Church of *Rome*, may seem to supply, yet is this confessedly no *Divine Appointment*, and hath been introduced instead of the other, which all own was used by the *Apostles* themselves; implying nothing of any Federal Rite, but rather intending a Ratification of the *Baptismal* than any *New Stripulation*; and is demonstrated, having been so Essentially altered from its first Institution, to be no *Sacrament*, which cannot be subject to any Ecclesiastical Authority. And so for,

Nor Pen-  
ance,

*Penance*; which also the Church of *Rome* calls a *Sacrament*, consisting of *Confession* and *Absolution*; there is no doubt, but it is a Man's Duty to make *Confession to God*, and in Case of Wrong unto Men, and sometimes (as in case of Doubt or Trouble of Conscience) to a *Minister* also, and for open and scandalous Offences such should be

rebuked before all, that others also may fear : And that, hereupon, the Minister hath Power, as an Herald of God's Mercy, to pronounce the Offers of Pardon made by *Christ Jesus*. All which we own and Practise as necessary Parts of Christian *Devotion* and *Discipline*. But then we cannot believe this to be a *Sacrament*, after the same manner that *Baptism* and the *Supper of the Lord* is ; because neither do we find any *Divine Command*, for it (as practis'd in the Church of *Rome*, exacting from People the unnecessary and impossible Task of *Auricular Confession* to a Priest, even where there is no Scruple, of every the most secret Fault, as absolutely necessary to Salvation.) Nor is there any Sign established herein by *Christ*, to which is Grace is annexed ; even that, which is pretended to be so, being neither a *Visible One*, nor of any long Institution, after many Changes made of its *Form* in several Ages of the Church. For which, and the like, Reasons we dare not pronounce this Discipline Sacramental and necessary to Salvation, nor hold that a contrite Sinner who hath made his Confession to God Almighty, and by his Grace hath reformed his Life ; shall not receive a Pardon unless he *Confess* to, and be Absolved by a Priest too. And, then, as for,

*Extream Unction*. Though we acknowledge it to have been an *Apostolical* Practice, and own therein both an *Outward and Visible Sign*, and an *Inward and Spiritual Grace* annexed thereto ; yet, can we not admit it to be a proper *Sacrament*, since it appears neither to have been of *Christ's Institution*, nor was ever intended or used by the *Apostles* for any *Sacramental Purpose* ; whose *Anointing with Oyl* was for the Health of the Body, and had no relation to the good of the Soul, (though our Sa-

1 Tim. 5.  
20.

Nor Ex-  
tream Un-  
ction.  
Mat. 6.  
13.  
Jam. 5.14.



viour and his *Apostles*, when they relieved the Body, at the same time forgave the Sins of the Soul too; for which Reason St. James, adds, *And if he have committed Sins they shall be forgiven him*; ) wherein Oyl was used not as a *Sacramental Conveyance* of any Benefit (for they cured oft-times without *Anointing*) but only as a *Symbol* or *Rite* (as was usual) accompanying a miraculous Virtue, (as our Saviour himself made use of *Clay*, in restoring Sight to the *Blind Man*) plainly relating to that *Gift of Miracles*, peculiar to that Age of *Curing Diseases*, and *Healing the Sick*; and therefore we do not *Anoint* our Sick now, for the recovery of their Bodily Health, because the miraculous Power of *Healing*, to which that Ceremony did once Minister, is long since ceased. And which can, however, have no relation to the New Institution of *Sacramentally Anointing the Sick*, for the Administration of Final Pardon, with all necessary Assurances to the Soul's Benefit only in its last Agony, and when all hopes of Recovery is past; which being so *Alien* is justly rejected by us, and put out of the number of our Christian *Sacraments*. And so, likewise,

Nor Orders.

*Orders*, or the Calling and separating of Persons to the Work of the Ministry by the *Imposition of Hands* and *Prayer*; which we own to be an Institution of Christ, and as such, its Use is continued by us, as He and his *Apostles* settled it in his Church; yet we deny it to be a *Sacrament*, because wanting an *Outward and Visible Sign*. The *Imposition of Hands* is only a Gesture in Prayer, importing the Designation of the Person so prayed over; which we do not read to have been instituted by Christ himself; much less that the Promise of any certain *Grace* is tyed to it; neither hath

hath *Imposition of Hands* been thought Essential to *Holy Orders*, even by some who have own'd it to be yet a *Sacrament*. Whereto, therefore, to supply this Defect of the *Outward Sign*, have been added other Rites of delivering *Vessels*, in making *Priests*, for the Conveyance of *Holy Orders*. Whereas this is notoriously an *Human Invention*: Not received into the Church for a *Thousand years* after *Christ*. And even yet is not sufficient to make this a *Sacrament*; since that *Grace* which is thereby conferred, whatever it be, is not common to all *Christians*, nor by consequence any part of that *Fœderal Blessing* purchased by our *Blessed Saviour* for us; but only a Separation of him, who receives it to an especial Employ. To conclude,

Lastly, *Marriage*, though we grant it to be capable of signifying the *Mystical Union* between *Christ and his Church*, and that it is an *Honourable Estate* instituted by God in *Paradise*; yet we cannot account it a *Sacrament*, after the same manner that *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper* are, because it both wants an *Outward Sign*, to which by *Christ's* Promise a Blessing is annexed; and is so far from being either peculiarly *Christian*, or *Generally necessary to Salvation* (as they are, and as we suppose all true and proper *Sacraments* ought to be) that as it is common to *Heathens*, so is it strictly forbidden to all the *Clergy* in the Church of *Rome*, and they are reckon'd a more holy sort of Persons who make Vows against it; and, in their own Opinion, renounce a *Sacrament*.

It appearing, then, from the foregoing Hints, that of all those Actions, which in a larger Sence may be called, and in a stricter Sence have been own'd as *Sacraments*, only these *Two* of *Baptism*,

Nor Marriage.

Eph. 5.

32.

Heb. 13.4.

and the *Supper of the Lord* have been so received *anciently in the Church*, and are all that are *Necessary*, and all that are exactly agreeable to the *Characters*, or have all the *Properties* belonging to a true and proper *Sacrament*; and that of the other *Five*, added by the *Papists*, (who upon the like *Reasons* might as well have added *Fifteen* more) some have none, and none have all such *Properties*, in the same manner as those *Two* retained by us have. Therefore as more cannot be admitted under the *Notion of Sacraments*, without great *Indignity* done to the *Authority of Christ*, and *Wrong* to his *Sacred Religion*, by *teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, and unreasonably making *Christ's Yoke*, that is *Light*, intolerably *Heavy*; so ought these to be the more tenderly and zealously treated by us, with the profoundest *Regard* and *Reverence*; as the most *Sacred Mysteries*, and endearing *Pledges of Grace*, obliging to the most *Holy Life*; and strengthening against all *Temptations to Sin*, to the *Glory of God*, and everlasting *Welfare of our selves*.

Mat. 15.

9.

--- II. 30.

*Which Blessed Effect may Almighty God vouchsafe us therefrom, by the Operation of his Holy Spirit thereby, for the sake of Jesus Christ the Author hereof! To whom be all the Glory, Now and for evermore. Amen.*

SER-

## SERMON XLVI.

ON

## BAPTISM.

Matt. xxviii. 19.

—Baptizing them, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

**T**HE Sacraments, in General, having had their Consideration in our last, we proceed in this Discourse to consider the same in Particular; beginning with the First of them, namely Baptism, concerning which the Text and our Catechism teaches us, this being the Initiating Rite instituted by Christ for the Discipling all Nations. Of this Sacrament, concerning Baptism, which, Inquiry being made into the two Parts, all that we are taught about it will be sufficiently explained; which are,

1. The Outward and Visible Sign; and, 2. The Inward and Spiritual Grace.

I. The Outward and Visible Sign in Baptism, we are taught is Water; wherein the Person is Baptized ward (as Sign.



(as in the Text) in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The full Sence and Import whereof will oblige us to a distinct Notice of these Two Particulars, viz. 1. Its Matter, which is the Element of Water. And, 2. Its Application, or the use Water is put to, which is to Baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

As to its  
Matter,

1. The Matter of Baptism is the Element of Water. Whereof Cleansing being the natural Property, hath recommended its Symbolical Use among the Rites of all Religions for the Remission of Sin. Upon which account it was used among the Heathens, who were wont to wash therewith before they Sacrificed, and after they had committed any great Offence, for the Expiation thereof, as also upon Initiating of any Person into the Mysteries of any of their Deities. And with the same Element it is certain the Jews initiated into their Religion, not only Females who could not be Circumcised, but also Males, both of other Nations having been already Circumcised, and those of their own People, whom they generally Baptized as well as Circumcised. For Baptism with Water had, of a long time before our Saviour's instituting it into a Sacrament, been added to Circumcision, as a further Declaration of the Impurity of Nature, and of the Purity of that Holy State, into which Men were thereby to be admitted. And with this Ceremony also our Saviour complied, who came not to Destroy, but to Reform the Jewish Oeconomy, the more to win them over to his Religion; adopting it into his own Institution; and, for its Significancy of that Purity which is the great Design of that which Christ intended should be the universal Religion

Religion of the World, he made *Water*, and only *Water* the *Sacramental Sign* of Admission into his Church.

1. That the *Baptism* which *Christ* instituted was *It is Water*, is manifest not only from the *Etymology* of the Word, which signifies a *Washing*, whereof *Water* is the proper and most usual Matter; but also from *Christ's own Practice*, who is intimated to have *Baptized* (either by himself, or, which is all one, by others acting by his Order) as *St. John the Baptist* did; which all know and own to have been with *Water*; and was before the *Baptism with the Holy Ghost*, which was not till after *Christ's Resurrection*. And the same sort of *Baptism* that *Christ* had used and commanded during his Life, his *Apostles* and others by them thereunto Commission'd did Administer after his Death. For so we read *St. Philip* did *Baptize the Eunuch*, and *St. Peter Cornelius* with his Assembly. The which hath been the constant and universal Practice of the Church in all Ages ever since, till of late oppung'd and condemn'd by the *Quakers*, asserting that the *Baptism* Instituted, and Commission'd by *Christ*, was only that *with the Holy Ghost and with Fire*. Whereas to *Baptize with the Holy Ghost* is peculiar to *Christ*, whose Gift it alone is, and which he hath promised and doth impart to them, who duely receive his Outward *Baptism with Water*; the Administration only whereof is committed to his Ministers, with whom, they *Baptizing with Water*, he also himself doth at the same time *Baptize with the Holy Ghost*; whereof the *Water* so used in the Ordained Sign and Pledge, in respect of its *saving Gifts and Graces*, though not in respect of its *Miraculous*, and extraordinary Visible Effects.

And

And therefore though all *Baptisms*, whether of the *Heathens*, *Jews*, *St. John the Baptist's*, or our *Saviour's* be alike with the Element of *Water*; yet do they vastly differ in respect of the *Authors*, their *Form* of Administration, and *Ends* of Institution; whereby *Christian Baptism* becometh a peculiar *Ordinance*, though a common *Ceremony* foreshewed by many *Types*; whereof the *Flood* that drowned the World and preserved *Noah*; the Passage through the *Red Sea*, wherein *Pharaoh* was drowned, and the *Israelites* saved, the *Cloud* under which God's People dwelt, and who therefore are said to have been all *Baptized unto Moses in the Cloud and in the Sea*; together with the *Divers Levitical Washings* mention'd by the *Apostle*, are all reckon'd to be *Figures* pointing to the Element of *Water*, as the determin'd proper Matter of *Christian Baptism*, whereby Sin is to be drowned, and the Soul saved.

And therefore where this Element is denied, the *Sacrament* is wanting (though its Blessing may not necessarily be with-held;) and consequently, That *Baptism* which is not with *Water*, is neither *Christian*, nor any *Baptism* at all. And therefore as some *School-Men* are observed, to have more nicely than soundly question'd, whether *Wine* or *Vinegar*, or *Sand* might not, in Case of Necessity, supply the want of *Water*; so are those *Hereticks*, of whom there are Records, universally condemn'd for ridiculous and perverse, who, guided by the Letter, *Baptised with Fire*, branding the *Flesh* with an hot Iron. And, as *Water*, so

2. Only *Water* appeareth to have been the Instituted Matter of *Christian Baptism*. And therefore, the Addition of *Salt* and *Spittle*, and *Oyl*, and *Milk*,

*Milk and Honey*, or any other thing as equally significant and Essential Signs therewith, is purely an *Human Invention*, besides Christ's Institution, and inconsistent with it, and unlawfully admitted as any Parts of this *Sacrament*. The which as it directly condemns the Practice of the Church of Rome, where Christ's Outward and Visible Sign, being the most simple Matter, is mixt with Pomp, and Variety of Novel and Strange Sacramental Rites; so doth this no way affect the innocent and significant Use of the *Sign of the Cross*, by our Church of England in Baptism; where it is not used till the Sacramental Rite of Baptism is over; and in some cases not at all therewith; and never in the Nature of any Seal or Assurance from God of his Grace to us; but only as a *Memorative Token* to put us in Mind of our Duty and Obligation to God; consonant to very ancient Custom in the Church of Christ: and upon the like Grounds as many other, or ever any significant Usages have been all along Arbitrarily taken up without Imputation, or Introducing of any New Sacrament.

2. The Application of this Matter, or the use of Water in this Sacrament is to Baptize: Wherein, <sup>As to its Applicati-</sup> (we are therefore, in our Catechism taught to say) <sup>on.</sup> the Person is Baptized, &c. agreeable to our Lord's Institution in the Text, Commissioning his Apostles to Go and Teach all Nations Baptizing them. Concerning which (that nothing of moment belonging thereto may be omitted) some Inquiry shall be made into the following pertinent Particulars, viz. 1. The Mode or Manner, hereby enjoined, of applying Water in Baptism. 2. The Frequency of so doing. 3. The Persons administering the same. 4. The Form of Administration thereof.



thereof. 5. The *Time*, when. 6. The *Place*, where. 7. The proper *Subjects* of such Ceremony. And, 8. The *Necessity* of its Celebration.

*Its Mode,* 1. The *Mode* or *Manner* hereby enjoyned, of applying the *Element* of *Water* in *Baptism*, appeareth to be determin'd, neither by the *Force* of the *Word*, nor the *Command* of *Christ*, nor the *Effects* of the *Sacrament*, nor the *Significancy* of the *Ceremony*.

Eph. 4. 5.  
Heb. 9.  
10.

For our *Saviour* useth the *Word* *Baptize* in an unlimited *Signification*, meaning a *Washing*, in *General*, without prescribing, in *Particular*, either *Dipping* or *Sprinkling* of *Persons* with *Water*; that so this his *Ordinance* might be accommodated to all *Ages*, *Conditions* and *Climates*. And though we read, that there is but *one Baptism*, yet we are also told, That *there are divers Washings*, or different *Modes* of *Baptizing*; whether *Total* or *Partial*, by *Dipping* or *Sprinkling*; both being several ways of *Washing* with *Water*, which was the only thing *Essential*, to the *Outward* and *Visible Sign*, enjoyned by our *Saviour*. Nor doth the *Etyymology* of the *Word*, in reference to the *Custom* of those *Times* and *Places*, *When* and *Where* spoke, imply any thing more for *Dipping* than it doth for *Sprinkling*; neither was *That*, rather than *This*, intended to be understood hereby, by the *Pious* and *Learned* *Translators* of our *English Bibles*; it being by them usually rendred *Baptizing* [*with*] *Water* (agreeable to our *Mode* of *Sprinkling*) and not [*in*] the *Water*, (which had been a more proper *Expression* for *Dipping*.)

Nor is *Dipping* any where *Commanded* in *Scripture*, as the only proper way of *Baptizing*. For, as it can never be proved from the account we have thereof any ones *Baptism*, whether it was  
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certainly performed by only *Dipping* or *Sprinkling* with *Water*; so it is neither probable, nor possible, that all who are said to have been *Baptized* were *Dipped*; since we read of many *Thousands Baptized* in one Day at *Jerusalem*; and of some *Baptized* in private Houses; and it was a very early, and generally allowed Custom in the Church, to *Baptize* some as they lay upon their Beds of Sickness, who were thence called *Clinics*.

Act. 2. 41.  
—16. 33.

And, without Doubt, it is neither *Dipping* nor *Sprinkling*, that the *Benefit of Baptism* depends on; since the *Outward and Visible Sign* thereof, being applied, the *Inward and Spiritual Grace* signified thereby, may be conveyed either way. And if Men do not resist the *Holy Spirit of God*, nor receive his *Grace in vain*, but are thereby purify'd in Heart and Life (of which many, I doubt not, have the Comfort and Testimony, who were only *Sprinkled* and not *Dipped*, when they were *Baptized*) it will be great presumption, and prophane Rashness to pronounce this Ordinance, either sinfully administred, or invalid in the Administration. For, though *Dipping* be a lawful and an effectual Way of *Baptizing*, yet it is not the only lawful and effectual Way of doing it, nor absolutely necessary: *Sprinkling* being as Lawful as it, and the *Baptism* administred *this Way*, being to all Intents and Purposes, as Valid and Effectual as *that way*. For, neither the *One*, nor the *other Way* is of the *Essence* of Baptism, or any otherwise than only *Accidental*, which cannot destroy its *Substance*.

And more especially since the *Significancy* of the Ceremony is as well, and more conveniently represented by *Sprinkling*, than by *Dipping*.

For

- Rom. 6. 4, 5. For, our *Burial* and *Resurrection* herein with *Christ*, to which the *Apostle* refers, is in some reasonable Measure represented by it; since he that hath *Water* poured on him, as well as he that is put into the *Water*, doth fairly exhibit the Similitude of *Burial*, (especially after our own Country Fashion, wherein, the Earth is wont to be cast upon the dead Body.) And the *Appearing* again after and from under that *Affusion*, representeth also a *Resurrection*, (tho' there be Some who deny any such *Representation* to be *Necessary*, and *All* acknowledge this not to be the *Primary Intent* of *Baptism*; yet in relation, even hereto the *Symbol* is not altogether spoiled hereby.) But, then the *Gift of the Holy Spirit*, which is the *Principal Thing* signified in *Baptism*, is expressly signified in the
- Isa. 44. 3. Scripture Language by *Sprinkling*, or *Pouring* on  
 Ezek. 36. 25. *Water*. And our being *washed and cleansed* from the *Guilt of Sin*, which is the *Principal End* of *Baptism*, is most appositely shewn by *Sprinkling*; this being not only the *Ancient Mode* of *Purification* from all *Legal Pollution* among the *Jews*, but a fair *Allusion* to that *Blood of Sprinkling* by
- Heb. 12. 24. *Christ*, that *Sanctifieth and Cleanseth* Christians.
- 1 Pet. 1. 2. And therefore, tho' it were evident, that in the *First Times*, in those *hotter Country*s, where *Washings* and *Bathings* of the whole *Body* were *Customary*, and where *Christianity* was first planted, not only *Most* but *All* Christians had been *Baptized* by *Dipping* (which is not to be proved,) yet ought not their *Practice* to oblige us in these *Colder Regions*, where such kind of *Washing* is neither *Customary*, nor can be always *Safe*, *Decent* or *Possible*.
- 1 Joh. 1. 7. And, therefore, knowing this not to be *Essential* to the *Sacrament*, our *Church* hath left the
- Mode

*Mode of Administring the Matter of Baptism*, as our Saviour did, undetermin'd; and not more Prudently than Charitably prescribed in the Rubrick, either Dipping or Sprinkling of the Person to be Baptized. Whereof now the Latter obtains, Custom having established its Administration, in pouring Water on the Face only, which is reckon'd to be the principal Part, wherein the Image of God most visibly appears, and by which the whole Person is represented, and thereby is sufficiently Baptized, without any infringement of the Validity or Benefit of Baptism.

2. *The Frequency of such Application of the Water in Baptism*, is considerable, with Respect, both <sup>Its Frequency.</sup> to the ancient Usage of a Trine-Immersion, and the now practis'd Error of Re-baptizing.

*The Trine-Immersion* is observed, to have been very early practis'd in the Church; whereby the Person to be Baptized was three several times <sup>As to a Trine-Immersion.</sup> Dipped or Sprinkled at the Naming of each Name of the three Persons, of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in the Godhead: This being supposed very well to express the Mystery of the Trinity; into the Faith whereof Christians are Baptized. Which Doctrine beginning even from the first to be question'd by some; this Ceremony seems to have been Instituted only to obviate the Heretical Opinion of such Opposers. And which therefore, being not founded on any Command of Christ, nor recommended by any Scripture-Example, cannot be universally obliging, nor be esteemed preferable to the Single Immersion, which is not only lawful but sufficient to set out the One God, as well as that Trine-Immersion did the Three Persons.



As to Re-  
baptizati-  
on.

The Practice of *Rebaptization* is the notorious Error of the *Anti-pedo-baptists*, at this day ; who require those who have already duely received *Infant-Baptism*, to receive also the *Baptism of Believers* (as they call it.) when they arrive at years of Capacity to be taught, and to make Profession of their own Faith, before they will own them to be true Members of *Christ's Church*.

Indeed it hath ever been the Doctrine of the Christian Church, that such Persons who have been *Baptized by Hereticks* ought to be *Re-baptized*. But this Doctrine was evidently grounded upon a Presumption only, that such *Baptism* was not Genuine, and no true *Baptism*, viz. such as *Christ* Commanded, and by which every *Christian* is to be initiated into the Church. For, otherwise, where *Baptism* was rightly administered for *Substance*, though in an undue Manner, and even by an *Heretick*, it hath always been own'd valid and good. And the *Church* only appointed, that Persons so *Baptized* should be rightly instructed in the Faith they were *Baptized* into, and exhorted to make a right Use thereof, and so were received by *Confirmation* into *Communion* with the *Church*, without *Re-baptization*. And therefore it also was generally taught, that whoever had been *Once*, at *any time*, rightly *Baptized*, neither *Ought*, nor *Could* without Sin, submit to be *Baptized* over again. For, there can be but *one Baptism* now, as there was but one *Circumcision* formerly, in the room whereof *Baptism* succeedeth : And, which being the *Sacrament* of our *New Birth* is no more to be repeated than a Man can be Born, in the same respect, more than *Once*. Neither is there either *Precept* or *Precedent* in the *Scriptures* for such Practice ; which di-

recteth

recteth not to *Rebaptization*, but only to *Repentance*, after having been once *Baptized*, for *Re-admission* into the *Church's Communion*, in case of *Apostasie* or *Falling a way from the Faith*, because the *Obligation of Baptism* is *Eternal*, never to be *Dissolv'd* however *Dis-regarded*. For he that is once *Baptized* is thereby bound to a *Christian-Life* without *Remedy*, whether he observe to live so or no; the *Obligation* not arising from the *Compliance of the Baptized Person*, but from the *Nature of his Baptism*, and the *Divinity of its Institution*. And therefore there can never be any *Need* of our obliging our selves a *second time* (unless he who *Instituted* it had required it of us) by what still remains in *Force*, and of which nothing hinders the *Efficacy*, but the want of our own *Concurrence*: Nor can it be *allowed* without a *Sacrilegious Renunciation* of our first *Dedication* to *God*, *disowning* our former *Relation* to *Christ*, *cutting* our selves off from that *Body* whereof he is the *Head*, and becoming *Guilty* of a most *uncharitable* *Condemnation* of the *Baptism* of all the reformed *Churches* throughout the *World*, as *Null and Void*: Allowing no *Church*, no *Ordinances*, no *Christianity*, but what is among the *Anti-pedo-baptists*.

The *Once Application*, then, of the *Baptismal-Water*, whether by *Dipping* or *Sprinkling*, thus appearing to be sufficient in the *Sacrament of Baptism*; we now proceed to consider, also,

3. *The Persons proper to Administer the same.* The *Persons Administering*. For, as *On the one hand*, from a mistaken *Belief* of the absolute, indispensable *Necessity* of *Baptism* to *Salvation*, it hath been allowed by some in the *Christian Church*, in case of *Necessity*, for not only *Lay-Men*, but even *Women*, or any *Body* to

*Baptize*, rather than any should die *Unbaptized*; so, *On the other hand*, from a pretended Veneration for so Sacred an Ordinance, others there have been who have scrupled the Validity of *Baptism* unless administred by one *Orthodox in Faith and Inculpable in Manners*.

For the avoiding of both these Extreames the Practice of our Church now, Rightly is, That as *Only lawful Ministers* of Christ's Gospel, so *All* such are authorized to *Baptize*. For,

*Only Ministers.* That *Only lawful Ministers* ought to *Baptize*, is manifest from Christ's Commission hereof given only to the *Apostles*, and joyning herewith the

1 Cor. 4. Office of *Preaching*. Who are, therefore, called *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*; wherewith unordained Persons have no Right to meddle, and who may as well presume to *Preach* as to *Baptize*.

And, though in Cases of great Necessity, a *Lay Mans Baptizing* was, for some time, connived at in the *Primitive Church*; yet was it never universally liked, and is spoken against by some of the *Fathers*, and was always accompany'd with this *Proviso*, That, if the Persons so *Baptized* lived, they should receive *Confirmation* from the

*Not Women.* Bishop. But the *Women's Baptizing* was generally Condemn'd, and is censur'd in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, to be not only *Dangerous*, but *Unlawful and Impious*; such being by the *Apostle* expressly forbidden to exercise any Ministry in the Church of God, who yet, at this *Day*, in the Church of *Rome*, are allowed without either *Warrant* or *Necessity*, and contrary to *Apostolical Injunction*, and *Ecclesiastical Usage*, most presumptuously to invade this Part of the *Priests Office*; and in time of *Danger* or *Absence of a Priest*, the *Women Baptize*.

But

But that all Legal Ministers are alike Authorized to Administer this Sacrament, notwithstanding their personal Faults of *Heresie* or *Immorality*, is now Generally and Justly acknowledg'd, how ever hotly once contested in the Church; seeing the Virtue of *Baptism* hath no dependance upon the Person Administring, but wholly upon him whose Institution it is; to the Magnifying of Divine Power in the meanness of the Instruments. And therefore our Saviour permitted Judas, though he knew him to be a Devil, to continue one of his Apostles, and in his Exercise of that his Function to Baptize, as well and effectually as the rest. The worst Instrument in God's Hand, who can bring Good out of Evil, may be productive of the greatest Good. Otherwise we should have no Assurance of the Efficacy of our Baptism, because not always certain of the Orthodoxy and Holiness of the Minister administring it; neither would Christ's Promise of being with them, in this his own Institution, always even unto the End of the World, signifie any thing, or possibly be made Good. And therefore whatever the Minister is (though it were heartily to be wished, that all Ministers were such as their Function is) yet so he be a Legal Minister, he ought to be esteemed, (the Ordinance being God's, and its Virtue his Gift alone, Communicable by whatever Instrument,) And as Baptism ought not to be Rejected or worse thought of for the Hand it is offered by; so ought it rather to be Wanted altogether (not doubting of the Mercy of God, in such Case, without it) than to be received from one Uncommission'd, and so have only a Baptism that is neither Commanded nor Blessed.



And thus now the *Matter, Frequency, and Persons Administring* the Application of *Water* in *Baptism* having been explain'd, Consider we further,

*Its Form of Administration.* 4. *The Form of Administration.* Which the *Text* expresseth as part of *Christ's* Commission to *Baptize*, and of whose *Essence* therefore it is to do so, *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; wherein all *Orthodox Christians* have ever agreed without altering or varying it; which they held could not be done without the *Guilt* of *Hereſie*, and *Nullity* of that *Baptism*, which shall

As 2.38. be administred without it.

And though, therefore, it be usual in the *Scripture* Accounts of *Baptism* to expreſs it as done in the *Name of the Lord Jeſus* only, without mention of either of the other *Names* in the *Blſſed Trinity*; yet are we not therefore to ſuppoſe this any other *Form of Administration*, ſince This was peculiar to that *Time* and *People*, rejecting *Jeſus* from being the *Meſſias*; and who being the immediate *Author* of that *Religion*, into which ſuch *Persons* were *Baptized*, the *Baptizing* in his *Name*, did properly enough expreſs the whole and every part thereof, obliging to the *Acknowledgment* of the other two *Persons* in the *God-head*, whereof the *Doctrine* of the *Trinity* is a principal *Article*. So that whoever is *Baptized with Christian Baptism* is neceſſarily *Baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; and hereby obliged to own the *Authority*, the *Efficacy* and *Design* of the *Rite*, imply'd in this its *Form of Administration*.

Implying  
its Autho-  
rity.

The *Authority* of ſuch *Action* is warranted by all the *Persons* of the *Holy Trinity*, by whose *Appointment* and *Command* is this *Administration* of the *Minister*. Who, not *Baptizing* in his

ow

own *Name*, to make *Profelytes* to any Party, or to disguise and burden Divine Worship by any Human *Invention*, ought boldly to execute his *Function* herein ; affecting Men's Minds with Veneration, and exciting Devotion during the Celebration ; having ever ready the *Apostles Answer* to the *High Priest's Question* ; *By what Power, or by what Name have you done this ? . . . . Be it known* <sup>A ct. 4. 7</sup> <sup>10.</sup> unto you all, and to all the People of Israel, that it is by the *Name* and Commission of *Jesus Christ* ; the Second in Conjunction with the other Persons of the *Blessed Trinity*, an Authority not to be question'd or gain-said.

The *Efficacy* whereof is, also, assured to the Receiver hereby. Wherein the whole *Blessed Trinity*, being thus signified to us to be engaged and conspiring to impregnate with Virtue this Ordinance for our Good, we are directed and encouraged confidently to expect, and depend upon a Blessing herein, however Needless or Jejune it would necessarily have otherwise been in the hands of Man. And therefore, also,

The *Design* of this *Form*, is, to Dedicate and Engage the *Baptized* to the Worship and Service of the *Holy Trinity* : The Doctrine whereof being principally founded upon this *Form*, appointed by our Lord in his *Baptism*, (reduced to these *Three Heads* of the *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, and containing what is necessary to be believed and done in Relation to each of these) a *Profession* of its *Faith* and *Stipulation*, for a suitable *Practice* must necessarily be intended, and hath ever been justly required from all initiated into *Christianity* by *Baptism*. And therefore to Dispute the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, no less contradicteth our *Christian Baptism* ( by which it is distinguished

from all other *Baptisms*) than it tendeth to violate all the Rules of *Morality*.

*Its Proper  
Time of  
Admini-  
stration.*

5. There are also some Considerations due even to the *Time* when such Administration of this Sacrament may be most Proper. Which our Saviour having left undetermin'd, *All Times* are therefore to be esteemed alike, as opportunity and occasion may offer for *Baptism*; yet have some *Particular Times*, as publick Order and Decency have prescribed, or as private Opinion and Humour have suggested, been usually, in all Ages, preferred for it before others. Hence, among ancient *Christians* the most Proper *Times* for Baptizing were restrained to the two Solemn Festivals of *Easter* and *Whitsuntide*; when the Commemoration of our Lord's *Resurrection* from Death, and the *Holy Ghost's* first Descent upon *Christians*, made the Season most Publick and best corresponding with the *Death unto Sin*, and *New Birth unto Righteousness* represented in this Sacrament. And some there were that held it best to defer their *Baptism* till just before their *Death*, from a false Mistrust they had of the Validity of *Repentance* for Sins committed after *Baptism*. But as this was ever accounted and declaim'd against, as an *Heretical Principle*, so that was required only as a *Convenient Practice*, to be dispenced with in Cases of Danger and Necessity; and wherewith Our Church hath so far complied, as to recommend a Preference of the most Publick and Festival Days, for the ordinary Celebration hereof; upon the most prudential Reasons. And which will, also Direct us to Consider,

*See the  
First Ru-  
brick of  
the Office  
of Bap-  
tism.  
Its proper  
Place.*

6. The Place accounted most Proper for *Baptism*. Which by our Saviour, also, was no more limited than its *Time*; and was at first, by his Fol-  
lowers

lowers celebrated indifferently in any Place, where there was *Water* and *Occasion* for it; yet as the *Order* and *Discipline* of the *Church* became settled, and particular *Places* for Divine Worship in *Publick* were set apart; Care also began to be had for the *Conveniency* of this Holy Rite. And as it had been always coveted to be performed, as near as might be to the Place of publick *Assemblies*, and seldom without the Presence of the *Congregation*; so were there *Baptisteria* or *Fontis* built, at First, near the *Church*, then in the *Church-Porch*, and afterwards in the *Church* it self; where-to All were obliged (except in Cases of extreme Necessity) to resort for *Baptism*. And according to this primitive Usage, is the place for *Baptism* generally appropriated to the Place of publick Assemblies among Christians at this Day; as, undeniably, most agreeable to the *Nature* and *Design* of this Ordinance; becoming, and belonging to the *Publick Worship* and Service; whereby the whole *Congregation* may be unanimously Consenting in what concerns them: *God* more religiously honoured by the Offering made to him; and the *New Member* of Christ's Church more solemnly inaugurated with the most noble Office and Order of his Calling herein.

Therefore it is rightly enjoyn'd by our Church, *Second Rubrick before the office for private Baptism.* that the Curate of every Parish shall warn the People, that without great cause and necessity, they procure not their Children to be Baptized at home in their Houses. Whereby the Ordinance is greatly corrupted, the *Publick Worship* injur'd, *Dissentions* encourag'd, and *Occasions* given of turning the most solemn Institution of our Religion into a piece of *State* and *Vanity* to some, an uneasie Charge to others, a certain Trouble to All, too often attended with very



very unseasonable *Excess* and *Sin*, from which there can possibly be no such Security, as a primitive Re-confinement thereof to its proper *Asylum* the Church, among our other religious Services in our publick Places of Divine Worship.

*Its proper Subjects.*

7. *The proper Subjects of this religious Ceremony*; is, in the *Text*, all *Nations*, and in our *Catechism*, indefinitely, *Persons to be Baptized*, of whom *Nations* are composed. Whence it followeth that, as *None but Persons*, so all *Persons* duly qualified are the *Proper Subjects of Christ's Baptism*.

*Only Persons.*

*None but Persons are to be baptized.* Because only such are capable of Covenanting thereby with God, according to the Nature and Design of such an Institution. And therefore the pompous Application hereof to *Bells* (as it is Practised in the Church of *Rome*, even with *Godfathers* and *Godmothers* also) is surely too gross and scandalous a Mimicking the most Sacred Ordinance of *Christ's Religion*.

*Duly qualified.*

*The Persons duly qualified for Baptism*, are *All*, since, *None* are excepted in *Christ's Commission*, and *All* are equally the Constituent parts of any *Nation*, whereto the *Rite* is appropriated. And therefore is the Administration of *Baptism* distinctly appointed for these *Two* sorts of Persons, viz. *Infants* and the *Adult*; Occasioning the Complement of *Two* different *Offices* appropriated to each, according to their different Qualifications.

*Infants.*

*The Infants Qualifications* for *Baptism* is wholly *Parental*, depending upon the *Baptism* of their Parents; from whom, being Born in Covenant, they derive a Right of Admission thereinto, and the Virtue of an Obligation thereby.

*Serm.*

*XLVII.*

*The Certainty and Reasonableness* whereof will fall under a more particular Inquiry hereafter.

In

In the mean time, it concerns us at present, only to take Notice of, (because the First in Nature, wherewith *Baptism* began, and without which it could not have found any Entrance into the World, even) *The Adults Qualification for Baptism*. Which is altogether *Personal*; depending upon certain Terms and Conditions to be performed by them, which *Infants* are neither capable of, nor obliged to, in order to Prepare them for the Reception hereof. And therefore (according to primitive Discipline) it is ordered by our Church, That when any such Persons as are of Riper years are to be Baptized, timely notice shall be given, -- That so due Care may be taken for their Examination, whether they be sufficiently instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion; and that they may be exhorted to prepare themselves with Prayers and Fasting for the receiving of this Holy Sacrament.

The Terms and Conditions required for the due Qualification of such for Baptism, are taught us from the Scripture in our Catechism to be Repentance and Faith. Therefore St. Peter directing the Jews to be Baptized in order to be Saved, exhorts them First to Repent, and then to be Baptized every one of them in the Name of Jesus Christ. -- And the Eunuch inquiring of St. Philip, What did hinder him to be Baptized, received this Answer, viz. If thou believest with all thine Heart thou mayst. Agreeably to both which Passages our Catechism, in answer to this Question, What is required of Persons to be Baptized? Instructs us to say, Repentance, whereby they forsake Sin; and Faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the Promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.

The Repentance Pre-requisite in the Adult for Baptism is a forsaking Sin; implying both an Aver- sion from Sin, and a Conversion to God.

For

For to *forsake Sin* is to leave it with an *Aversion*, so as to stand at the greatest Odds with, and furthest Distance from it. And this we may suppose to be, in some measure, necessarily accompanied with a *Sense of its Evil*, a *Grief and Sorrow* for its Commission, a *Confession* of the Guilt contracted thereby, a firm *Resolution* against any Future Compliance therewith, and a sincere *Recompensation*, as much as in us lies, for all the Injury done by it. And, even yet further, to *forsake Sin* implies, our leaving it with

A through *Conversion* to its contrary Side, and hearty *Reconciliation* to God; actually engaging with all our Powers against it; promoting a contrary Interest; giving God that Heart and Affection, formerly set upon the World, and enslav'd to our Lusts; swearing Allegiance to him alone, and being made Free, by Repentance, from Sin, necessarily becoming *Servants to God*. Which therefore the *Scriptures* call; a turning away from *Transgressions*, and doing that which is *Lawful and Right*; a *Conversion* from *Darkness* unto *Light*; a putting away the *Evil* of our Doings, by *Ceasing* to do *Evil*, and *Learning* to do *Well*.

And  
Faith.

The Faith required in the *Adult* to dispose for *Christian Baptism* is a *stedfast Belief* of the *Promises* of God made to them in that *Sacrament*.

The *Promises* therein made are of those *Graces* and *Benefits* conveyed, confirm'd and sealed to Persons thereby of *Remission of Sin*, and *Spiritual Regeneration* (which are the *Inward and Spiritual Grace* in *Baptism*;) And whereof a *stedfast Faith*, both of *Assent* to, and of *Desire and Acquiescence* in the matter of such *Promises*, is not only reasonable (considering whose they are, and what they import to us) but also *Necessary*, inasmuch

as being already made and declared by God, they can no otherwise be made over and appropriated to Man, but by being believed and closed with, by Covenanting for them with God in *Baptism*.

These are the Things that are *required of Persons to be Baptized*. And because it may in Charity be presumed, that none will desire to be *Baptized* without these things; nor offer themselves to be made *Christ's* Servants thereby, but from a Resolution to *forsake Sin*, and *steadfastly to believe* the Truth and Benefit of his Religion, therefore is *Baptism* to be ordinarily refused to none Desiring it. And all that are thus *Baptized*, are *Baptized* as *Penitents* and *Believers*, whether they really are so or no. For, such they are required to be; and such they must be, in reality, to render their *Baptism* available to Salvation; But professing to be such by their Desire to be *Baptized*, and to *Renounce* thereby *the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the Sinful Lusts of the Flesh*, as such they have a Right to be admitted thereto, however they prove, which God the only searcher of Mens Hearts is capable of discovering.

And on these and no other Terms do all those Multitudes, *Baptized at once*, and some on a sudden, and others having led a *scandalous Life*, evidently appear to have received this Sacrament at the Hands of the *Apostles*: Which only initiating into the visible part of *Christ's Church*, required only a visible Profession of *Faith and Repentance* as a sufficient qualification for its outward Administration. And therefore for the interest and more speedy Enlargement of the Church of *Christ* in the World, and more effectual promotion of Mens Salvation, being hereby admitted thereinto,

Act. 2. 41.

16. 33.

8. 13.



thereinto, did the *Apostles* reasonably enough make such hast as they did, to *Baptize* Persons after they had once gain'd their consent to turn *Christians*, without any further Trial.

It remains only, that we now consider also this *Outward and Visible Sign in Baptism*.

*Its necessity.*

8. Lastly, As to the *necessity of its Celebration*; grounded wholly upon the Authority of its Institution by *Christ*, who has made it a Precept to which Obedience is due in order to Salvation. And therefore, though God may save in some Cases, without Baptism, and in others Damn with it; yet in no case may a Man hope to be saved that wilfully persists to live in Disobedience to a Divine Command. So that although not any *Natural Efficacy* in its self, but only the *Authority* of him that Commandeth it, maketh this necessary; yet it nevertheless obliges our observance in order to our Welfare.

And this is not impertinent to be added to what hath already been said concerning this *Visible part* of this *Sacrament*, which being by the Ignorant Vulgar usually consider'd no otherwise than as to its Ceremonious performance; is too apt to be neglected by some, and slighted by more, as a thing *Indifferent*, upheld only by *Custom*, and used to promote more of *Hospitality* than of *Religion* among us. Whereof no want is; therefore, perceived by them that never had it, and no value set upon it by them that have.

Many Persons there are, who either being the unhappy Children of Licentious Sectaries, or of Profane Wretches, have never been Baptiz'd at all. And tho' they are now attained to Understanding themselves, yet never desire it; yea, and what through stupid Ignorance unreasonable

reasonable Prejudice, or vicious Modesty, are very rarely and hardly to be perswaded to it : Inasmuch that the Generality of such (if their Want of *Baptism* chance not to be took Notice of, some way, to their Prejudice, among their Neighbours) remain satisfied in such Concealment ; and covet not the *Benefit* of being *Baptized*, so much as they dread the *Reproach* of being *Unbaptized*. Many, I have reason to suspect it, Live and Die undistinguish'd among *Baptized Christians*, insensible of their wanting any thing to set them upon equal terms in the Church with the *Best*, because doing and enjoying as much as the *Worst* of Professors therein.

And for this Scandal, let all *Unworthy Christians* (by the bye) think themselves greatly chargeable ; who having been *Baptized*, slight the *Privileges* that have a Right to, and violate the *Obligations* they ought to be restrained with thereby. And through their own fault, being never the better (and therefore much the worse) for it, have given Occasion for the Contempt of a Divine Institution ; (the ways of God being unavoidably worse thought of for the Evil of their ways who pretend to walk in them) tempting Men that never were *Baptized*, never to desire it ; seeing they cannot be worse, and it may be do appear to be much better Men without it.

But how ill soever some *Baptized* Persons may be observed to live ; yet let the *Unbaptized* remember that no Abuse, though it be an Aggravation of Sin, can excuse the Neglect of a Duty. And let such also know, that the very worst *Christian* is in far better Circumstances by having received *Baptism*, than any, though the best Man,

Man, can possibly be in, while he wilfully neglects it. For by *Baptism* they are made *Members of Christ*, *Children of*, and in Covenant with, *God*, called to a *State of Salvation*, wherein the worst of Sinners upon their true Repentance, have a Right to God's Mercy through *Christ* to support Hope, and Encourage Expectation in the last extremities; whereas without *Christian Baptism* there is no admittance that we know of, or that is permitted, whereby to get within the pale of the *Church*, (this being the only appointed Way thereof) to which Salvation is ordinarily confined; and without which God not having made known to us any Means for Mercy, there can possibly be no reasonable Grounds to expect it, however an Unbaptized Person Lives. For though *Faith* and *Repentance* are also God's own Terms, yet they are not his only Terms of Salvation. And without *Baptism* as these cannot ordinarily be had, so neither can they certainly avail to save if they could. For he that savingly *Believes*, can hope to be saved by his *Faith* only by the Vertue of *Mercy*, through *Christ* covenanted for in *Baptism*; (whereon all the Efficacy of *Faith* depends) and who must necessarily be, therefore, *Baptized* before his *Faith* can certainly avail him. Whence none in *Scripture* are called *Believers* before *Baptism*. And he that savingly *Repents* must forsake *Sin*, and consequently desire *Baptism* in Obedience to *Christ*, which while he wilfully neglects, he remains in a Sin unrepented of. And such an one then, may as well hope to go to Heaven, when he Dies with Rapine and Blood in his Hands, as in a presumptuous Refusal and Want of this *Holy Sacrament*, which is no less a Violation of a Divine Law, and no less liable to Eternal Death;

Death, *the Wages of all Sin*. And therefore it is *Rom. 6.*  
 our Saviour's own Doctrine at his final Instituti-<sup>23.</sup>  
 on of this Rite, *He that Believeth and is Baptized*  
*shall be Saved, but he that Believeth not shall be*  
*Damn'd*: Intimating, that only Faith in Conjun- Mark  
 ction with Baptism is Saving, though without <sup>16. 16.</sup>  
 Faith, even Baptism it self will not Save.

And though these each contribute towards Sal-  
 vation in a different manner, (the one as a *Means*,  
 the other as a *Precept* necessary thereto) yet they  
 are generally both equally the Condition thereof.  
 And no Man, then, who wilfully neglects to be  
*Baptized*, can have better ground to hope he  
 shall be saved upon the account of his Faith,  
 than any Man may hope to be saved by his *Bap-*  
*tism* alone, though he remain and profess him-  
 self an Infidel.

Consider this ye that are *Unbaptized* (if any  
 such chance to read this) and lay seriously to  
 Heart the apparent Hazard and Disadvantage of  
 your present Circumstances, detaining you, thus,  
*Aliens to God, strangers from the Covenant of Pro-*  
*mise, having no Hope to depend on and without God* Eph. 2:  
*in this World*; being in a state of Actual Sin against <sup>12.</sup>  
 him, which renders all your *Labour* and Endea-  
 vours to be saved in vain being not in the Lord. <sup>1Cor. 15:</sup>  
 And dare not, then, any longer to venture the <sup>58.</sup>  
 continuance of so great a Hazzard, that may so  
 easily and quickly be removed and prevented.  
*If God had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst* <sup>2King. 5:</sup>  
*thou not have done it? How much rather then, when* <sup>13.</sup>  
*he saith to thee wash and be clean?*

And yet there are many more, who having  
 been washed and made clean hereby, are no less  
 unworthily senseless of the Necessity of this Sacred  
 Institution in Christ's Church, doing as great  
 H h Indignit-



Indignity thereto by *sighting*, as those others do by *neglecting Baptism*. Whom no Obligations can restrain, no Vows bind, no Promises encourage; the generality of *Christians* living as if they either never had been *Baptized*, or stood in no manner of need thereof; treating this *Divine Ordinance* only as a *civil Custom*, with more Concern for the Ceremony than for the *Religion* of it. Whereas these ought to remember that a very *considerable* thing was done to them when they were *Baptized*, that there is much more than what is *Ceremonious* therein; that the most *important Concerns* are veil'd and convey'd thereby; without which their Circumstances must necessarily have been much worse, with which they cannot be *Desperate*, and through which alone they may be as *Happy* as their *Capacities* and *Needs* can admit of; since though a wicked *Baptized* Person is the worst of *Sinners*, yet have such the greatest *Encouragement* to *Reform*; having a sincere and timely *Repentance* to trust to, for Assistance wherein, and for the efficacy whereof they are wholly obliged to this Ordinance covenanting for Mercy to them. And from such remembrance, ought all such, as, to express the heartiest *Gratitude*, so to excite the most ardent *Devotion* towards God, whenever they are called upon to worship him in the Celebration hereof: Especially considering what the other Part of the Sacrament implies, now coming under a brief Consideration; even,

The In-  
ward  
Grace of  
Baptism.

II. *The Inward and Spiritual Grace* in *Baptism*, represented, conveyed, and ascertained to us for spiritual Ends and Improvements according to Christ's own Institution by such an *Outward and Visible Sign*. Which though not expressed in the

the Text, yet is from the Scriptures very particularly taught us in our Catechism, to be "a Death unto Sin, and a New Birth unto Righteousness: For being by Nature born in Sin, and The Children of Wrath: we are hereby made the Children of Grace: Implying in a Federal Sense, both Benefit conveyed hereby, and Duty obliged and sealed to herein; (Covenanted Mercy obliging to Conditions)

1. The Benefit represented, conveyed and ascertained from God to us in Baptism is, according to our Inward and Spiritual Need, and the Design of all Religion, relief against Sin, both Original and Actual.

1. That Baptism is the Remedy against Original Sin, is what our Catechism expressly teaches, asserting, that, "Being by Nature born in Sin, we are hereby made the Children of Grace; and is what our Church elsewhere declares to be the Reason of her Baptizing Infants, who though they never committed Sin, yet are not free from Sin: "Forasmuch as all Men are Conceived and Born in Sin; descending from a Sinful Rebellious Race, and having in them those Seeds of Perversity which are contrary to the Will of God, and strongly incline against Reason and Resolution to those Evils, from which there ought to be an aversion; and whence, if Life continues, and Divine Grace restrain them not, will certainly afterwards spring innumerable Evil Actions. This is plainly the Doctrine of the Scriptures; is made an Article of our Church; is acknowledged by Heathens; believed by Jews; professed by all Orthodox Christians; and sadly experienced by every Son of Adam. In respect whereto Sin is said to dwell in us, and no good thing; and

Its Benefit.

The Remedy against Original Sin.

Office for Baptism.

Art. 9.

Rom. 7.

from 17, 18.

from which *Baptism* is intended to be the *Means* and *Pledge* of Deliverance; whereby God purifies and admits to Reconciliation and Covenant with himself a *Peculiar People*; whereof washing by Water, cleansing from all stains, is a most apposite Representation.

*Actual Sin.*

2. That *Baptism* is a Remedy against *Actual Sin*, is a necessary consequent of its being a Deliverance from all past Sin, indefinitely (as the *Scriptures* represent it to be) in every respect whatsoever, whether as to its *Guilt*, its *Pollution* or *Power*.

*Its Guilt.*

1. Against the *Guilt of Sin*, *Baptism* is intended both as a *Means* to convey, and as a *Pledge* to assure forgiveness. For hereby it was that *St. Peter* exhorted the *Jews* to be *Baptized*, even for the *Remission of Sins*. And *Ananias* also called upon

A. 2. 28. *St. Paul*, to arise and be *Baptized*, and thereby wash away his *Sins*. And this is that *Gospel-Grace* and *Mercy of Christ*, which having purchased and merited by his *Passion*, he effectually consigned in *Baptism* to the Members of his *Church*; which

Eph. 5. 25.

*St. Paul* tells us, he lov'd, and delivered himself for, that he might sanctifie it, purging it by the washing of Water; insomuch that how wicked soever a Man may have been, yet all his past *Sins* are remitted immediately upon his being duly *Baptized into Christ*. And therefore with respect hereto it is that *God* is said to justify the ungodly.

Rom. 4. 5.

1 Cor. 6.

11.

And such, saith the *Apostle* to the *Corinthians*, were some of you: But ye are washed, but ye are Sanctified, but ye are Justified in the Name of the Lord *Jesus Christ*. And this being so evidently the Doctrine of the *Scriptures*, hath ever been the unanimous and firm Belief of the *Church*, and is made an *Article of Faith* in one

one of the *Creeds* used in our Publick Service wherein we acknowledge one Baptism for the Remission of Sins. Nicene Creed.

2. Against the Pollution of Sin, Baptism is appointed to Save us by Purifying and Cleansing with the Grace of Sanctification or Conversion; consisting of these its two parts, viz. Mortification, in a Death unto Sin, and Regeneration, in a New Birth unto Righteousness. Pollution.

Mortification, or a Death unto Sin, is the killing of those Sinful Inclinations of corrupt Nature which dispose to Actual Impieties. Sin being so far Dead in us, as we are Dead to it, and feel both its Activity to decay, and our own Desires towards it. Which as it is wrought in us by the supernatural infusion of Some Divine Principle; so is our Baptism represented to us as the Means and Pledge thereof. Whereon St. Paul's supposition of those Baptized Romans, he writ to, Rom. 6.2, 3, &c. being all Dead to Sin, is grounded; and mentioned not as their Duty only to be performed, but as their Privilege or inward and spiritual Grace already received by them. Wherefore, says he, Know ye not, that so many of us as were Baptized into Jesus Christ, were Baptized into his Death? Therefore we are Buried with him by Baptism into Death . . . . . Knowing this that our Old Man is Crucified with him, that the Body of Sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve Sin. Hereby intimating and asserting a Christians Mortification to be the Effect of Baptism, procuring that spiritual Power, assisting and working it by our own sincere Endeavours, and signifying and assuring it to us by the representation of our Burial with Christ therein. So that Baptism is that which gives Sin its first Deaths



Rom. 6.  
22.

Wound ; whereby if we continue true to our Covenant against it engaged in, it will not any longer live to hurt us, nor shall we live to nourish or serve it ; being made free from Sin, and become Servants to God, we shall have our Fruit unto Holiness, and the end Everlasting Life. And this is the other part, completing our Sanctification, saving us from the Pollution of Sin by Baptism, called

Regeneration, or a New Birth unto Righteousness ; which is our Entrance into a new State and course of Life ; being endowed with new Faculties, Dispositions and Capacities, becoming New-Creatures, and New-Men ; the Principle whereof is implanted by Baptism, whose Dictates followed and improved will excite and assist our own Endeavours to follow the conduct of God's Holy Spirit instead of our Natural Inclinations now Mortified in a free and voluntary practice of, and continuance in all manner of Holy and Virtuous Actions. And this is what Baptism also signifies to us by our being washed therein, as New-born Babes were wont to be for their cleansing ; representing also by our appearance from under the effusion of Water afterwards, our Resurrection to a New Life from our having been Buried with Christ therein. Therefore saith St.

Rom. 6.4.

Paul, we are Buried with him, by Baptism into Death, that like as Christ was raised up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father ; even so we also should walk in newness of Life. And this too is the Grace which Baptism is appointed to convey to us ; according to the Doctrine of our

Jo. 3. 5.

Lord to Nicodemus, Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Which is paraphrased by that of

the

the Apostle . . . . . According to his Mercy he saved Tit. 3. 5.  
 us by the washing (or Laver) of Regeneration, and  
 renewing of the Holy Ghost. And was Prophefied  
 of and Promised by the Inspired Prophet Ezekiel,  
 saying, Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, Ezek. 36.  
 and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from 25, 26.  
 all your Idols will I cleanse you. A new Heart also  
 will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you ;  
 and I will take away the Stony Heart out of your  
 Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of flesh. The  
 belief hereof, as it was the Ancient Profession,  
 so it is the Present Meaning of our Church ; " Yield-  
 " ing Hearty Thanks to God our most Merciful Fa-  
 " ther, at the Baptism of every Infant, that he  
 " hath pleased thereby to Regenerate it with his  
 " Holy Spirit, then dispensed according to the Office of  
 Capacity of the Sufcipient, and expected to be Infant  
 shewn in the Operations of a Spiritual Life, as Baptism.  
 diminished or increased in Mens future Con-  
 versations ; no way lessening the Mercy, but  
 magnifying the Obligation of Baptism, whereby all  
 are Regenerated, and if it be not their own fault,  
 continue thenceforward clean, through the Eter-  
 nal Spirit . . . . . Purging our Consciences from Dead  
 Works to serve the Living God. And therefore  
 finally,

3. Against the Power of Sin, Baptism is both Power.  
 the Pledge and Means of our Security ; whereby  
 being Pardoned and Purified, we are also made the  
 Children of Grace, incorporated into the Church,  
 and not only delivered from the Thralldom, but de-  
 fended from the over-powering Assaults of Sin ;  
 being interested in all the Immunities and Pri-  
 vileges of that Heavenly Corporation, which  
 are not ordinarily to be had out of it. Of this  
 St. Peter assures us, that the saving of Noah from 1 Pet. 3.  
 the 21.

the *Flood* in the *Ark*, was a *Type*; even of our *Salvation* in the *Church* by *Baptism*, from the *General Deluge* of *Sin* drowning the *World*. And therefore, whom our *Church* *Baptizeth*, she declares to be *received into the Congregation of Christ's Flock*; which is to be a *Member* of that *Body*, whereof he is said to be the *Saviour*; to have *put on Christ*, . . . . to be *all one with Christ*; being united to one another in *Christ*, our *Common Head*; who hath promised to be *with us*, (being thus *Discipled* to him) *even to the end of the World*, to receive our *Prayers*, to *intercede* for us, to consider our *needs*, to support our *infirmities*, to nourish all our *Graces*, and to enable us to *do all things through Christ strengthening us*; That *being steadfast in Faith, Joyful through Hope, and rooted in Charity, we may so pass the Waves of this troublesome World, that finally we may come to the Land of Everlasting Life, there to reign with him World without end.*

Such is the *Inward and Spiritual Grace*, signified and conveyed to us from *God*, by the *Outward and Visible Sign in Baptism*, which also implies and ratifies our *Obligation* in several conditional *Duties* towards him.

2. The *Duty* obliged and sealed by us to *God* in *Baptism*, is that *Condition* upon which these *Benefits* were offered to and accepted of by us; even that *Repentance* and *Faith* which was required to qualify for the *Reception* of that *Pledge* and *Means* of *Grace* whereby it was signified and conveyed to us. To this therefore, every *Person* either by *himself* or by his *Sureties*, solemnly vows when he is *Baptized*; promising too, " *Re-nounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this Wicked World, and all the* " *Sin-*

Office of  
Baptism.  
Eph. 5.  
23.  
Gal. 3. 27.  
28.

Mat. 28.  
20.

Phil. 4.  
13.

Its Obligation.

Church Ca-  
tesisism.

“ *Sinful Lusts of the Flesh: To believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, together with the Promises of God made to him in this Sacrament: And, to keep God’s Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of his Life.* Concerning which (the Nature and Obligation hereof having already had their Consideration) it will be only further requisite to hint here, that as only our *Outward Profession* hereof, was sufficient to qualify us for the *Outward Sign*, so our *Inward Sincerity* and *Perseverance* therein, must be necessary to interest us in the *Benefit* and *Inward and Spiritual Grace* in *Baptism*. For, we are not to look upon the Administration of this Sacrament, as the Application of a *Charm* to us, Physically influencing; but as a *Fæderal Rite*, Morally operating. Its Vertue depending on our Fidelity in our part of the Covenant that we engage in; And according to our Faith and Mat. 9. Repentance, so only will it be to us hereby. And 29. therefore, as upon our *Publick Profession* of such Duties we received the *Gospel Grace*, so only upon our *Persevering Performance* thereof, may we continue to hold what we received in *Baptism*.

The result of all, in a word is, as to excite our *Thankfulness* for our *Baptismal-Benefit*, so to engage our *Care* for the *Performance* of our *Baptismal-Vow*: Not esteeming that less, for the Obligation of this; but this much the more obliging for the greatness of that: The one necessitating our more earnest *Prayers* by how much the other solicits our hearty *Praises*, Therefore,

For the Benefit of our Baptism, “ *yield we hearty office of thanks to our most Merciful Father; that it Baptism hath pleased him hereby to Regenerate us with his*



“ his Holy Spirit, to receive us for his own Children  
 “ by Adoption, and to incorporate us into his Holy  
 “ Church; which is from a state of Sin and  
 Death, to call us to a state of Salvation; wherein  
 neither former Guilt, nor Pollution, nor Power of  
 Sin canstop our passage to the Consummation of it  
 in Glory, if we persist in, and maintain and im-  
 prove the bountiful and condescending Grace of  
 our hopeful Circumstances, so advantageous up-  
 on any terms to us, who can deserve it upon  
 none. And yet it is the more advantageous to  
 us, upon the account of those Terms we have  
 Covenanted upon for it, obliging by the greatest  
 Rewards to the greatest Good. And therefore  
 also,

For the Performance hereof, we can never be  
 too solicitous; lest falling from the greatest  
 Hopes, we plunge our selves into the most  
 wretched Despair; frustrating all past endea-  
 vours; putting our selves back into the same or  
 worse state and condition wherein we were be-  
 fore; rendering our recovery more hazardous and  
 difficult; and exposing our Persons as more Guil-  
 ty and Criminal, so liable, if we so Die, to a  
 deeper and more dreadful Ruin. Having, there-  
 fore, as the Apostle speaketh, Our Bodies washed  
 with pure Water; Let us hold fast the Profession of  
 our Faith without wavering. For, as he adds, if we  
 Sin wilfully after that we have received the know-  
 ledge of the Truth, meaning the solemn Profession  
 of Faith in Baptism, there remaineth no more  
 Sacrifice for Sin; but a certain fearful looking for  
 of Judgment and Fiery Indignation which shall de-  
 vour the Adversaries. He that despised Moses’  
 Law, Died without Mercy under two or three wit-  
 nesses: Of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye  
 that

Heb. 10.

22, 23.

26, 27,

28, and

29.

that he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was Sanctified, an Unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace. Ye therefore Beloved, as St. Peter exhorteth, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. While we stand, we should be fearful from our own Natural weakness and inconstancy lest we fall. And if at any time we wilfully fall, we should hasten, lest any of us be hardened through the deceitfulness of Sin, to recover our selves by a speedy and sincere Repentance; securing our future steadfastness by watching more carefully against the occasions of our past miscarriages; resisting even the beginnings of Sin and the more indiscernible defects of Nature; Hating even the Garment spotted by the Flesh; keeping a Conscience void of Offence, towards God and towards Man; every Day abounding in the work of the Lord; designing and desiring to Work out our own Salvation, begun in Baptism, and to perfect Holiness in the fear of God; and giving all diligence to make our calling and Election sure: Remember always (as our Church admonisheth) that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the Example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him; that as he Died and rose again for us; so should we who are Baptized, Die from Sin, and Rise again unto Righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt Affections, and Daily proceeding in all Vertue and Godliness of Living. Finally, for this, humbly beseech we  
 ‘ God

2 Pet. 3.  
17, 18.

1 Cor. 10.  
12.

Heb. 3.  
13.

Jude 23.  
Act. 24.  
16.

1 Cor. 15.  
58.

Phil. 2.  
12.

2 Cor. 7.  
1.

2 Pet. 1.  
10.

Office of  
Baptism.

' God to grant *That we being,* thus in Baptism,  
 ' *Dead unto Sin and Living unto Righteousness,* and  
 ' *being Buried with Christ in his Death,* may, in Life  
 ' and Conversation, crucifie the *Old Man,* and ut-  
 ' terly abolish the whole *Body of Sin,* and that as we  
 ' are made *Partakers of the Death* of his Son, we  
 ' may also be partakers of his *Resurrection;* so that  
 ' finally with the *Residue of his Holy Church,* we may  
 ' be *Inheritors of his Everlasting Kingdom,* through  
 ' *Christ our Lord.* Therefore,

Collect for  
 Easter-  
 Eve.

' Grant, O Lord, that as we are Baptized into  
 ' the *Death of thy Blessed Son our Saviour*  
 ' *Jesus Christ,* so by continually mortifying  
 ' our *Corrupt Affections,* we may be Buried  
 ' with him; And that through the *Grave*  
 ' and *Gate of Death,* we may pass to our  
 ' joyful *Resurrection,* for his *Merits,* who  
 ' Died and was Buried, and Rose again for  
 ' us, thy Son *Jesus Christ our Lord.* Amen.

SER-

## S E R M O N XLVII.

O N

## Infant-Baptism.

Mat. x. 14.

*Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not : For of such is the Kingdom of God.*

**A**FTER the Consideration of the Sacrament of Baptism in General, being to treat, according to the Method of the Catechism we are Explaining, of Infant-Baptism in particular, I have made choice of these *Baptism of Infants.* words for my Text, both because they contain the particular Argument our Church insists on for it in the Office appointed for its Administration; and implying a Divine permission thereof, they also obviate the very Objection against it, of Childrens incapacity for it; and which also our Catechism takes care particularly to remove, in order to its more firm establishment. And therefore as in our Catechism, Infant-Baptism is asserted by the Resolution of this Question, *Why then are Infants Baptized? When by reason of their tender-Age they cannot perform that which is required of Persons*



*Persons to be Baptized?* So in our *Text*, the same is warranted in our *Saviour's* Reprehension of the Opposition made to have hindered such from coming to him. Whence the vindication of *Children's Capacity*, and declaration of their *Acceptance with Christ*; which our *Text* and *Catechism* Conspire to teach, are grounds sufficient for *Infant-Baptism*.

To illustrate and improve which, distinguish we *Three Particulars*, in these words, viz. 1. The *Persons* concerned therein, said to be *little Children*. 2. Their *Concern or Cause* in Dispute, and that was their *Coming to Christ*. And, 3. The *Final Decision* hereof in their favour; who are not only *Permitted* but *Commanded* not to be hindered it, *Suffer little Children to come unto me*, saith our Lord, and forbid them not.

The Persons concerned.

I. The *Persons* concerned here, are *little Children*, and all indefinitely, even others as well as those here mentioned.

'Tis certain they were *little Children*, of whom our *Saviour* here spake, being *little* both for Age and Stature; called in the Original *νῆπιοι* [Young Children] in the *Text*; and in *St. Luke* *βρέφη* [Infants] such as were brought, or carryed, to come to *Jesus*; such as he took up in his Arms when brought; and such therefore as by reason of their tender Age could not be capable to perform any of the pre-requisites of *Baptism*.

Luke 18.  
19.

'Tis no less certain that it was indefinitely, all such, even others as well as those here mentioned, that our *Saviour* spoke of. Who upon this particular Occasion, gave a general Command; and from whose particular Expression a general Conclusion may be fairly drawn: Since no reason can

be assigned, Why only These and not other Children should be meant. *All* standing in the same *Need* Christ's Mercy, having a like *Capacity* of becoming his Subjects, for whom he bears the same *Compassion*, so as never to refuse any such being brought unto him, and which is of equal *Concernment* to all Infants of all Ages and Places in the World, even to the End thereof. Consider we, therefore,

II. *Their Concern or Cause here in Dispute*; which was their *Coming to Christ*, opposed and discountenanced by some *Disciples*, perhaps, thinking it below the Dignity, and besides the Business of their Lord to be approached by *Little Children*, and Impertinency in *those that brought them*, to interrupt hereby his more weighty Employ of *Instructing the Adult*; wherein though both they that brought, and those who would have hindered them from coming to Christ, might probably regard nothing more than a personal Approach at that time to him for a Blessing; (who then being Corporally present, might be so come unto by the Children of that Age, while he continued on Earth among them) yet nothing hinders but that Christ might and did, upon this Occasion, intend more in his Command, (extended to *Little Children* of all Ages, of whom the *Kingdom of God* consists, as well after as before our Saviour's Ascension into Heaven) whereby even our Children also, so long after the removal of his Corporal Presence from the Earth, may be equally permitted and qualified, without Opposition, to come unto him, in a *Figurative* Sense, wherein he still invites all that Labour and are heavy Laden to [Come unto him,] .. to take his Yoke, even the Profession of his Religion (for which Purpose Baptism is the insti-

*Their  
Concern  
disputed.*

Mat. 11.  
28.

- instituted Ordinance) and then, being *Discipl'd* to him, to learn of him, according to the Commission he was about then to give out, for the *Discipling all Nations, Baptizing, and then, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he Commanded.*
- 28, 19, 20. *Discipling all Nations, Baptizing, and then, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he Commanded.*
- Joh. 3. 26. In which respect all Men are said to have come to him, that sought his *Baptism*. And those are said not to have come to him, who, how oft soever they were in his Company, refused to become his *Disciples*, not making Profession of his Religion. So
- 5. 40. that to *Come*, in the *Figurative* Sense *Christ* here spoke, is to be *Profelyted to him*; which is a *Coming over to Christianity* from all other false Professions; and which some will have to be implied in the Original words ἐλθεῖν πρὸς, whereof the word *Profelyte* is compounded, and which the Ceremony of *Baptism*, according to *Christ's* own Institution, could alone compleat. And
- Joh. 4. 1. therefore the *Making and Baptizing Disciples* are join'd together, as *Synonymous Words*; there being no other way appointed for *Discipling*, but by *Baptism*; nor any other *Coming to Christ*, who is now in Heaven, but by being first made his *Disciples* by *Baptism*, hereby evidently permitted to *Little Children* whom he will have suffered to come unto him; as well as any others, and to be no more forbid it this way (which is the only Ordinary, Visible, Legal, and Possible way of making *Profelytes to Christianity*) than any other Candidate for his *Discipleship* whatsoever.
- And notwithstanding our *Saviour* did not then, in this way *Disciple* those *Little Children* that were brought unto him; who were neither *Baptized* by him, nor brought for that Purpose (because, Perhaps, their *Parents* had not been *Baptized* themselves, upon whose Admission the Right

of *Children* thereto dependeth; or because, however, they could then personally approach *Christ*, who might thereby communicate to them the Virtue and Grace of *Baptism* without its outward Administration; for which *his Time was not yet fully come*, and whereto he is not tyed as we are; who never *Baptized* any in *Water* himself; nor, that we read of, ever commanded his Disciples to *Baptize*, or any to be *Baptized* by them, till after his Death and Resurrection; yet, he upon this Occasion, hath effectually warranted our bringing *Little Children* to him, in this way, by *Baptizing* them in his *Name*, being the appointed way of *Coming* to him now; and hath published hereby his Willingness to receive such into his Favour, and their Capacity for it. For, (as our Church argues from this Passage for this end) "Our Saviour *Christ* commanded the Children office for  
"to be brought unto him; he blamed those that would Baptism.  
"have kept them from him; he exhorted all Men to follow their Innocency; and by his Outward Gesture  
"and Deed he declared his Good-will toward them, for  
"he embraced them in his Arms, he laid his Hands upon them and blessed them. All which was Equivalent to *Baptizing* of them. And he that did all this in their Favour with such Freedom, Zeal and Tenderness cannot reasonably be supposed to have denied them *Baptism*, had it been as necessary then as it is now for Admission into his Favour; or to have sent them away from him, after all this shew of Love and Good-will for Infancy, in a State of Sin and Enmity, the Children of *Wrath*, depriv'd of their Privilege they before had to relieve them. And therefore *Christ's* receiving *Little Children* in any Way whatsoever is sufficient Assurance to us, that he is willing they should be brought to  
I i him;



him, in some Way or other, and would not have them *forbid* in any, much less in his own appointed way, to *Come unto him*. And this is,

The Deci-  
sion in  
their Fa-  
vour.

III. The Final Decision of their Disputed Cause, in their Favour; express'd in the Text (as is not unusual in the Scriptures, when Earnestness or Importance is intended) both *Positively*, by way of *Permission* [*suffer the Little Children to come unto me.*] And *Negatively*, by Way of *Command* [*forbid them not.*]

Positive-  
ly.

I. *Positively*, by way of *Permission*, Christ orders *Little Children* to be *suffered to come unto him*; intimating herein a Supposition of some *Antecedent Right* to the thing now permitted. A *Permission* being strictly, the Renewal or rather Establishment of a former Grant. And therefore the *Proselytism of Infants* was not hereby designed to be appointed by any *New Institution*, but only confirmed and continued, by reason of a late Dispute, as an *Ancient Privilege*. Our Saviour's meaning hereby being that *Little Children* should have their own *Right* as well as others, which they have always had, and ought not now to have been opposed in, being no more intended to be excluded Covenanting with God under the *Gospel*, than they were under the *Law*. And therefore as there is no Need, positively to ordain any new Law in their Behalf, as to this Case; so 'tis but Justice that they should be *suffered*, without Innovation or Molestation, to enjoy their ancient Privilege of *Coming* under Covenant with God, and being admitted and owned visible Members of his *Church*, as of Old they had been, as well as any others whatsoever. And to strengthen this (if possible) beyond any more Dispute. Further,

2. *Negative-*

2. *Negatively*, by way of *Command*, our Saviour also enjoins, that none shall, upon any Pre-<sup>Negative-</sup>tence, ever presume hereafter to *forbid them*. Intimating hereby the Importance of their acknowledged Right of *Coming to him*, intending more than a bare *Permission*, that usually leaves things indifferent, and making it a *Divine Command*, that always renders indifferent things *Necessary*. When then, the Admission of *Infants* into the Visible Body of *Christ*, is declared to be not only their *Right*, (for which *Christ's* bare *Permission* was sufficient) but to be their *Interest*, for the Security whereof his *Command* was also necessary. It not being to be imagined, that our Saviour would have interpos'd his Authority. with great Zeal and Heartiness against his own *Disciples*, in any thing *Unreasonable*, *Unnecessary* or *Unprofitable*. And therefore, as from *Christ's Sufferance of Little Children to come unto him*, we may infer their *Antecedent Right*; so from his *Commanding*, that none should *forbid them to come*, we may conclude their *Capacity* for it, their *Need* of it, and *Advantage* by it. The Proof of which things will be a sufficient Confirmation to us of our Saviour's Concession to *Infant-Church-Membership*, by *Baptism*, in this his *Permission* of *Little Children to come unto him*, and his *Command* not to have them ever *forbid*. And therefore, Consider we,

1. *The Right of Children to Visible Church-Membership*, or a *Coming to Christ* in *Covenant-Engagements*. Which is so far from having been any *New Institution*, that it is probably as *Old* as *Adam*, and will continue as long as the *World*: There having never been from the beginning of the *World* (that we know of) any *Church*, or *Society of People worshipping God in Covenant*,

Implying  
Infants  
Right to  
Baptism.

wherein *Children* have not been comprehended ; and out of which (it continuing still the same for Substance) they were never yet, nor ever will be excluded. Therefore, as in *Adam* all fell, so in the covenanted Promise of Grace, first made to him, were all included ; even *Infants* being of the *Seed of the Woman*, and thereby an *Infant* promised, that was to be the *Head of the Church*.

In *Abraham*, when the same *Church* began to be *Jewish* ; and a Separation of a *People Peculiar* to God, from the rest of the *World*, required some Mark of Distinction ; even then also, were *Infants* included with their Parents, and commanded to receive the *Token of Circumcision*, by which they were declared to be the *Children of the Covenant*, and Entituled to all the Blessings of it.

And in *Christ*, when this *Token* was laid aside, it being inconsistent with the *Covenant of Grace*, which was by him finally promulged in the most full and perfect Degree, that it either needed or ever shall be ; and when another Sign of Visible Church-Membership was instituted in its room, viz. *Baptism* ; nothing but an Express Prohibition could possibly take away *Childrens Right to This*, who had before a *Right to That*. Which we are so far from meeting with, that the contrary is fairly intimated, by the Approbation and Allowance of our *Saviour*, by the Practice of his *Apostles* and *Followers*, and by the present Constitution of our *Church*.

For our *Saviour* never let one word fall of excepting *Children* from any Privilege they ever had before in the *Church*. He indeed, said but little about them, because so much had been formerly declared in their behalf ; and he said nothing at all particularly of their being *Baptized*, both be-  
cause

cause their Right to *Circumcision* inferr'd it, and their being wont to be *Baptized* constantly when they were *Circumcised*, long before our *Saviour's* time, in the *Jewish Church*, rendred it altogether Needleſs. He Commiſſion'd his *Apoſtles* to *Diſciple all Nations*, whereof *Children* are a very conſiderable part; and therefore, warrant-ed the *Children of Chriſtian Proſelytes* to be admitted into the *Church* now by *Baptiſm*, as the *Children of the Jewish Proſelytes* were wont to be by both *This* and *Circumciſion* formerly. He, alſo, upon Occaſion, at ſeveral times, very frankly declared his ſingular Good-will towards ſuch, as much as ever he did, or could do towards any other, the moſt eminent Members of his *Church*; which had been altogether inconfiſtent with the Severity of debarring them ſuch a Privilege. He receiv'd and *Bleſſed Little Children* when brought. He rebuked thoſe that would have hindered their *Coming to him*. He Commands that they ſhould never more be *forbidden*. He expreſſly declares that *of ſuch* [as well for *Age* as *Innocence*] *is the Kingdom of God*, in the *Church* here, and *Heaven* hereafter. Therefore he alſo ſpeaketh of ſuch being *received in his Name* (as eminently they are ſo when they are *Baptized* into *Chriſt's Religion*) and for their Purity from *Actual Sin*, they are numbred by our Lord among ſuch as *Believe in him*; becauſe not to be reckoned among any as were *broken off* from him, that could be ſo only through *Unbelief*.

Mat. 28.  
19.

Mat. 18.

Ver. 6.  
Rom. 11.  
20.

After *Chriſt* his *Apoſtles* and *Fiſt Followers*, who had ſo lately been themſelves of the *Jewish Church*, where they had been accuſtom'd to *Infant's Proſelytiſm*, and could not yet have forgot the late *Rebuke* ſome of them had received



from *Christ* himself for offering to oppose it: (Yea, though as the First Propagators of the Gospel, they were to proffer *Baptism* only to the *Adult*, by the Right of whose Admission their *Children* were of Course, as formerly, to be received with them into the Church,) to make way for This, urge this their Children's continued Privilege, as a Motive for such to be hereby Profelyted themselves. And, accordingly, together with Parents, Children were, in all Probability, *Baptized*, and never again forbid, or in the least discourag'd from their Discipleship. As may be fairly Collected from their *Baptizing* of whole *Houſholds* together upon the Conversion of the Chief of a Family, without ever leaving out any *Infant* of a *Christian* Believer (that we know of, and whereof we should have been sure to have heard Complaint made, had there been any then left) *Unbaptized*: As also from their Preaching, that the *Promise* was to them and to their Children; now as much as ever; whom therefore, they pronounce to be *Holy*, being separated to God now as of Old they were wont to be; reckoning such under the Denomination of *Disciples*; and hereby preventing all occasion of Complaint, or Objection against *Christianity* of any unreasonable Innovation or Disadvantage in altering or restraining the Terms of Communion, which remain the same they ever were, free and open to all Believers and their Children. And This, we are assured from Antiquity, that the *Apostles* taught the Church by Tradition, as they did the Change of the *Sabbath* and other things, which the Church observeth as religiously, as if there was a written Command for them, wherein it hath been Universally practised ever since, and by

Act. 16.

15.

1 Cor. 1.

16.

Act. 2. 39.

Rom. 11.

16.

1 Cor. 7.

14.

Act. 15.

10.

by several ancient Constitutions very particularly Commanded. All which agrees to *Isaiah's* Prediction, recited by *St. Paul*, of the Calling of the Jews in Gospel times, in the very same manner, as God was wont to do in the *Old Testament* times; receiving Children with their Parents into the Church, to be Educated in the true Religion, as the Ordinary appointed way of Propagating the *Christian Profession* and Professors, as it had ever been from the beginning, to continue without any substantial Alteration, from Age to Age, to the end of the World. And therefore,

*The Constitution of our own Church*, so well grounded, is not without reason to be also urged, vindicating the *Right of Children to Church-Membership*; by both, making *Baptism* a particular Article of her Doctrine, and ordering a two-fold Office in her Liturgy for its Celebration; the one fitted for *Publick Solemnity*, the other ministering to *Private Necessity*; the First Rubrick prefix'd whereto, Orders the Curate of every Parish to admonish often the People, that they defer not the Baptism of their Children longer than the first or second Sunday after their Birth, or other Holy Day falling between, unless upon a great and reasonable Cause to be approved by the Curate.

So then, here is *Prescription*, vindicated and maintained, throughout all Ages of the Church, conferring a most undoubted *Right*, (which nothing but an unavoidable *Incapacity* to receive it, can reasonably frustrate) upon *Infants to be Baptized*. And therefore Consider we now,

2. *The Capacity of Little Children for this Right Infants to Visible Church-Membership by Baptism.* Which Capacity depends upon the Consideration of their Capacity for Circumcision, question'd by none, because

expressly Commanded by God, and actually enjoyed by Children. For the Covenant being still the same, and the Seals alike, and the Children as capable of one as of the other; it must follow, that if ever *Little Children* were capable of Sealing to the Covenant by *Circumcision*, they must remain still capable of Sealing thereto by *Baptism*.

For the Covenant is still the same; and *Baptism* is now the Seal of that very Covenant, which was once Sealed by *Circumcision*; both being founded on the very same Conditions of Faith and Obedience; containing the same general Promises of Justification and Life Eternal, and having respect to the same Mediator Jesus Christ; who hath ever, in all Ages, been the Head of the Church; there having never been any other True Church in the World, but what was the Church of Christ; who was that Seed of the Woman, in whom Salvation was promised to our First Parents; of the Seed of Abraham, in whom it was prophesied, That all Nations of the Earth should be blessed; whose Day Abraham himself saw and rejoiced; and in whom, though the Jewish Church, as such, began; yet being founded on the Evangelical Covenant the Christian Church was therein continued; and was the same for Substance with that Covenant which now through the Manifestation of Christ in the Flesh hath been more clearly revealed and enlarged. And therefore it is said, That the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through Faith, Preached before the Gospel unto Abraham; who is called, the Father of all them that Believe, though they be not Circumcised: And whose Seed and Children We, therefore, that believe under the Gospel now are as much, in God's prime Intention and true meaning

meaning of the words, as those that were Believers under the Law. Whence the Apostle saith further, that *We are the Circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no Confidence in the Flesh.* And that it is one God which shall justify the Circumcision by Faith, and Uncircumcision through Faith. And, therefore, if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's Seed and Heirs according to the Promise. From all which it appears, that as the Church of God was the same for Substance under the Law, that it was before it; so it still remains the same for Substance under the Gospel, that it was under the Law. Judaism being nothing but (as one calls it) *Mystical Christianity*, and Christianity nothing but *Reformed Judaism*. In respect whereto our Saviour saith, *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.* So that it being the same Covenant into which Children have been always admitted, their Capacity for Admission must necessarily remain the same also; and Little Children that were capable of Circumcision, be no less capable of Baptism. Especially since further,

Phil. 3.2.

Rom. 3.

30.

Gal. 3.

29.

Mat. 5.

17.

*The Seals of this Covenant are still alike, though not the very same; differing only in Circumstance, but according in Nature. Both signifying the same thing, and Intending the same Design. For as Circumcision to the Jews, so Baptism to us Christians doth represent natural Corruption, needing an early Lustration. And the one as much as the other distinguishes a peculiar People, in Union, devoted to God, and initiated into the Covenant of Grace thereby. And Baptism being a Sign more suitable than Circumcision to the Gospel-state, Christians may be said now by That*

to



to be spiritually *Circumcised*, as the *Jews* of old might be said by This to be spiritually *Baptized*. Which is what *St. Paul* means, telling the *Colossians*, That they were *Circumcised with the Circumcision made without hands, in putting off the Body of the sins of the Flesh by the Circumcision of Christ*; Being *Buried with him in Baptism*; this being the very same now under the *Gospel*, that That was then under the *Law*; both alike positive Institutions; both Ordinances of the *Gospel*, *Preached before unto Abraham*; both successive Sacraments, being Signs and Seals of the same Grace and Righteousness of Faith. So that *Infants* that were capable of the one under the *Law*, cannot be incapable of the other under the *Gospel*. Especially, considering also, that there is no new Incapacity to be supposed in themselves; since Finally,

*Little Children are as Capable of one as of the other*; even as much *Outwardly* able, and *Inwardly* disposed to be *Baptized* now, as ever they were to be *Circumcised* formerly. Not so much strength of *Body*, being requisite for That as for This; and neither This nor That necessitating any actual *Application of the Mind* at the time of Celebration; since neither the *Obligation*, nor *Benefit* of *Covenanting with God*, doth necessarily depend upon the present Intention.

For it is the *Equity* of *God's Commands* that lays the *Obligation* of *Obedience* upon Men, and not their own *Consent*. And, as the Prophet *Ezek. 2.7.* spaketh, *whether they hear, or whether they forbear*, yet the *Obligation* lies upon them, because it is fit and just, that Men should do what *God Commands* them. And in this Case a Man may bind his Heir, or a Parent his Children, even before they are born. For however, early and necessary

cessary the Obligation may be, yet the Performance it requires doth always respect Capacity: Because no Man can be obliged to do what is impossible for him to do; but obliged only to do it when it shall be possible for him. And a *Sacrament*, which is a Sign and Seal of such Performance, carries an Obligation along with it, whether there be a Capacity to understand it or not; upon which account the *Jewish Infants* that underwent *Circumcision*, undertook thereby Obedience Gal. 5. 2. to the whole Law, tho' they knew not, what either Obedience or Law meant. Both which they were yet obliged to, as soon as they arrived to years of Understanding, by their having been *Circumcised* in their Infancy. So that the Obligation of a *Sacrament* is no way invalidated by any natural Incapacity of Children to understand it at the time of receiving it.

Nor are the *Benefits* intended, any more frustrated hereby; since nothing hinders but that God may solemnly bind himself unto them, who cannot yet personally bind themselves unto God; and may discharge Guilt and Obnoxiousness to Divine Wrath, where for the present neither the Worth nor Want of it can be understood. And *Infants* that are confessedly capable of *Salvation*, cannot rationally be supposed lyable to suffer through an Incapacity for any of the *Benefits* of *Baptism*. Whose *Innocence* preventing, exceedeth *Repentance* and needeth not actual *Faith*, that are the Qualifications required in Adult Persons to be *Baptized*; and both being *Promised*, in their Name, by their *Sureties* (according to the allowed Custom of the Church for many Ages, even probably from the very beginning thereof) when as by reason of their tender Age they cannot perform them;

them; this Promise when they come to Age themselves are bound to perform. Whereof Baptism is a no less Significant, though more transient Sign, than was Circumcision; since the spiritual Use of neither the one nor the other can be understood without Instruction, which none are capable of receiving, till they come to years of Discretion; till when, there is no more reason to defer Baptism

Gen. 17.  
12.

(as some would have it) than there was Circumcision (that none durst dispute) which God commanded to be administred at Eight Days Old upon pain of Excision. And why the Child of a Christian should be less capable of receiving one Seal of the Covenant, than a Child of a Jew was of another, is what never yet hath been satisfactorily accounted for. Which is sufficient to vindicate the Significancy of receiving Infants into Covenant with God by Baptism, even when they can know nothing of it; and is not to be opposed without Reproach to the Divine Wisdom, that was the Author of the Institution at first, and hath never either directly, or by Consequence forbid it since; but hath very remarkably, even in the Text, rebuked and forbid the very Offering to forbid it.

The Capacity, then, is as clear as the Right of Infants to Church-Membership; and both alike greatly Significant, serving to their Necessity. And therefore, Consider we also, now, briefly,

Infants  
Necessity  
for Baptism.

3. The Necessity of Little Children's being brought to Christ's Baptism. And this ariseth from that Guilt of Original Sin, defiling all the Sons of Adam, who are born Children of Wrath, and for ought we know remain so, till by being Baptized they are Sanctified, and thereby made the Children of Grace; this being the Means for Remission of Sin;

*Sin* ; for which Reason alone St. Peter exhorted the converted Jews , and Ananias, St. Paul to be Baptized ; who also himself afterwards taught that Christ gave himself for the Church, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it with the washing of Water by the Word. And though God may save unbaptized Children, in their Innocence from Actual Sin ; yet this is not the State of revealed Salvation, unto which he calleth them, Wherein the Benefit of being made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritour of the Kingdom of Heaven can be, ordinarily, received ; and out of which State only Prerogative and extraordinary Mercy, not to be presumed upon, can save. However, the Guilt of Original Sin it self is Damnable ; and whether this can be done away by any other means besides Baptism, is more than what God hath told us ; or would have us to depend on ; who, though he can *Do what he will*, and needeth not to be tyed to means himself ; yet we are not to presume that he, therefore, will do all he can, who hath tyed us wholly to means. Therefore, under the Law, a Male-Child that was not Circumcised the Eighth Day, was threatned to be cut off from God's People, as a breaker of his Covenant. And what Circumcision was then, that Baptism is now ; the Neglect whereof merits no less Excision. And, therefore, 'tis certain, Parents cannot do more towards the Damning their Infants, than to with-hold from them this means appointed by God for their Salvation. Whatever, then, Children may need from God, they certainly stand in need hereof from Men in order thereto ; and it is the safest Course that can be taken in their behalf for it ; and those Parents may be in danger of Hell for Contempt, though their

Act. 2. 38.

---22. 16.

Eph. 5.

26, 27.

Gen. 17.

14.



their Children should suffer nothing for their Want hereof.

So Necessary is Christian Baptism even to Infants; the denial whereof continues them in a State of Sin, out of Covenant with God, to the hazard of their Salvation in the Ordinary instituted way, upon the most uncertain and secret Method of extraordinary and unrevealed Mercy. It only remains now, that we Consider also,

Infants  
Advanta-  
ges by  
Baptism.

4. Lastly, *The Advantages of Infant-Baptism.* Which are neither few nor inconsiderable whether considered in it self: Or compared with the Baptism of the Adult.

Office of  
Baptism.

*Infant-Baptism considered in it self is of great Advantage, even to Little Children. As it initiates them into the Visible Church; whereby they are made Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritours of the Kingdom of Heaven. There being hence derived to them an Honourable Relation; a Gracious Influence (according to their Condition and Capacity;) a tender regard and care towards them from Christ their Head; a Communion with the Church his Body, providing for their Pious Education and timely Instruction, that they may be Vertuously brought up to lead a Godly and Christian Life; interesting them in all the intercessions of Christ, at God's Right Hand for his Church, and in all the Supplications of the Church to God, through Christ; and giving them a right to the special Promises of Church-Privileges, of Justifying and Sanctifying Grace here and of Perfect Glory in Life Everlasting hereafter.*

*As Baptism, also, Devotes and consecrates Infants to the Service of God, it is further of great advantage, whereby they become Holy unto the Lord; are called to be Saints, separate from the Common*

1 Cor. 12.

Common Condition of Pollution and Prophane-  
ness, unto the Adoption and Portion and Blessing  
of God. And finally,

*As it Covenants them with God* by a mutual sti-  
pulation and Contract, it entitles them to the  
*Terms of the Gospel*, and obligeth them under the  
most Sacred *Vows*, and keepeth them from being  
at their own hazardous dispose, or being at Li-  
berty to hearken to any other Engagements or  
dissolution of these; which is the greatest check  
and restraint upon Sin and Ruin that can be pro-  
vided; and Seals to the most advantageous Bene-  
fits upon the most advantageous Conditions,  
whereon alone the most solid Joy and Confidence  
may build with certainty; such as will animate  
Endeavours, and support under pressures una-  
voidable, and otherwise unconquerable and in-  
supportable in this World. So that *in it self*,  
the *Baptism of Little Children*, importing all this,  
is a great Blessing and considerable advantage  
not to be withheld or denyed without great in-  
justice and uncharitableness towards them. More  
especially since also,

*Infant-Baptism compared with the Baptism of the  
Adult*, hath so much of peculiar Advantage, be-  
ing administred in the most proper Season, and  
with most probability to the best Purpose. For  
*Infancy* is the most innocent part of our Lives,  
and freest from all suspicion of Hypocrisie to de-  
file the purity of the Sacrament. It forestalls by  
pre-engagement, all the Claim and Allurements  
of Spiritual Enemies that watch early to ensnare  
and possess us. It is a more speedy Deliverance  
from the Guilt and Danger of *Original Sin*,  
which by Delay strengthens and tends to habits  
of *Actual Sin*; whereby Sinners become Cap-  
tives

1 Tim. 3.

*tives to their Lusts and Satan.* It stimulates the wholesome sorrow of *Repentance*, by the dreadful Aggravation of Guilt contracted under the Vow and Grace of so Sacred and Solemn an Ordinance. It admisters the only Consolation to Parents for the Death of their Infant-Children. And is the most effectual Course to prevent as scandalous neglects and delays of *Baptism*, as are usual with respect to the other Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, appropriated to the Adult to the blemish of Christianity, and ruine of the Church. Insomuch that both the *Number* and *Goodness* of Professors is doubtless owing to this Institution; who had they not been *Baptized* till themselves had been capable and disposed to require it, might have been neither so early nor Zealous in the Service of God.

Upon so well grounded reason did our Lord vindicate *little Children's coming unto him*; to which they had an unrepealed *Right*, a proper *Capacity*, a real *Necessity*, and important *Benefit* depending upon it. All which things laid together, and duly improved by Consideration will conduce,

Use of  
Conviction.

1. To Convince all Enemies to *Infant-Baptism*, Of their *Opposition* to our Saviour's *Good-Will* towards *little Children*; to that *Justice and Charity* which is their Due; to that *Defiance* belonging to a *Divine Institution*; to the *Unity and Peace* of the *Christian-Church*, and the *Interest of Religion*; so injuriously affected by rejecting *Infants Visible Church-membership*; separating from the *Communion* of those that allow it; *Unchurching* the greatest part of *Christendom*; and maintaining the most odious Sin of *Schism*. Which is surely a most *Anti-Christian Opposition*, hence receiving *Conviction* and requiring *Reformation*. And therefore this ought also,

2. To

2. *To Caution* all well-meaning Professors from *Caution* hearkening to, or any way encouraging and conniving at the seducing and pernicious Doctrines of such; being of so impious a Nature and fatal Consequence; shunning their Error as rash and dangerous; receiving and holding fast the Primitive Truth as safe and profitable. And let this also serve,

3. *To Encourage Parents* to bring and suffer their *Encou-* Little Children to come to Christ, having their *rage-* Hearts Rightly Disposed for, and in a Manner *ment* highly becoming such an Ordinance. Gratefully esteeming God's Rich Mercy to them and their Families herein; confidently depending upon the gracious Efficacy hereof; devoutly consigning theirs with themselves to the Service and Mercies Covenanted for hereby. And this *speedily* without unnecessary delays, by making their Children God's as soon as they become theirs. And if it may be Publickly in face of the Congregation, that by the *Prayers of many* the Influence of the Ordinance may be more plentiful, and the ratification of the Engagement more solemn. However not without expressions of great Joy, besitting the day of their Espousals to Christ (the best Day of their Lives) whence all the Blessings of their other Days are alone derivable. And to this, Parents are obliged, even out of respect to the *Exemplary Kindness* Christ himself expressed towards them, and the tender *Care* he took to prevent *wrong* to them; out of the *Natural Compassion of Humanity* to their own Bowels; out of a necessary principle of *Justice* to do Right; out of a Regard to *Capacity* to be improved; out of a due sense of *Want* to be supplied; out of a Pious Desire *to do good*; out of an obsequious *compliance* with Ecclesiastical *constitu-* tions;



tions; yea, out of *Conscience* to their own Duty; endeavouring hereby to *save their Children*; that they may not, for their Impious Neglect or Contempt be *Damned* themselves. And this therefore again, ought,

Obligati-  
on.

4. To oblige all concerned in bringing of Little Children to Christ in Baptism, to diligent and faithful Care and Endeavours in their after-Education. It being just that they who brought them under the Vow, should assist in the seeing it made good by them. For which End it hath been by our Church most advantageously provided (were the Advantage but duely taken) to call in the assistance of *Sureties* as Supervisors and Sponsors, to the weighty Charge of Parents (too many of whom are unable and more careless) of training up their Children in the way of the Christian Profession, the only end and blessing of Infant-Baptism. And therefore, as all Parents ought to be very careful whom they call in to their Assistance; so those that are called, as they ought not lightly to refuse so charitable and honourable a Work, so ought they to resolve to go thro' with it as much as in them lies, for the Salvation of those they are ingaged for. As often as there is occasion, faithfully and with Authority, putting the Parents in mind of their Duty herein; and in case of neglect themselves procuring, that (according to the Charge they received) the Children they stand ingaged for, may be taught so soon as they shall be able to learn, what a solemn Vow, Promise and Profession they had made by them, &c. Whose faithful Admonitions as no Parent can reasonably resent ill; so the Baptized Child is bound to revere, and not only thankfully receive, but earnestly desire as the greatest Kindness and only usual Expende they ought to expect

Office of  
Baptism.

expect from their *Sponsors*; shewing themselves forward to learn and to be assisted in their Duty, without the practice whereof as they might as well have been Unbaptized; so will it be more tolerable with *Turks* and *Infidels*. And therefore, this finally, ought,

5. To necessitate all Baptized Persons sincerely to *Necessity*: endeavour to live up to their Privilege and Profession. Remembring the early *Covenant* they were engaged in; the *Obligations* thence lying immovably upon them; and the *Blessings* made over assuredly unto them. Upon every solemn Occasion and instituted Means, willingly *Renewing*, and steadfastly *Confirming* the same, with humble Contrition for past Miscarriages, and importunate Desires and Resolutions for future Conformity. Accounting no farther on *Baptism* than as it reforms the Life; and thence deriving Encouragement and Assistance to walk worthy of the *Vocation* whereunto they are called. And therefore,

Grant, O Lord, that as we are Baptized into the Death of thy Blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; So by continually mortifying our Corrupt Affections, we may be Buried with him, and that through the Grave and Gate of Death we may pass to our joyful Resurrection, for his Merits who Died, and was Buried, and Rose again for us; thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Antiph.*

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# SERMON XLVIII.

## ON

# CONFIRMATION.

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Heb. vi. 2.

———— *The Doctrine* ——— *Of Laying on of*  
*Hands.* ———

**A**FTER the *Doctrine of Baptism*, (which was last discoursed of) followeth, in the *Catechism* we are Explaining, that of the other Christian Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*: To the Explanation whereof I should have immediately proceeded, were there not another intervening Ordinance required by our *Church*, and mentioned here in the *Text*, that hath already been hinted at by us, *Sermon I.* in the *Institution of a Good Christian*, and therefore not impertinent to be more particularly insisted on, next after *Baptism*, whereof it is the *Consummation*, and immediately before the *Lord's Supper*, whereto it is a requisite *Preparation*, in pursuance of that great Design aimed at in these Discourses, explaining the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion, among which the *Doctrine of*  
*laying*

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*laying on of Hands* is here reckoned, and so to be esteemed by us.

Concerning which, I shall be obliged to take notice of the following Particulars.

I. The Christian *Doctrine* here meant by *laying on of Hands*.

II. The Authority whereon it is grounded, and become now an established Rite, and standing Ordinance in the Church.

III. The Persons with whom its Ministry is intrusted therein, whose *Hands* are to be *laid on*.

IV. The proper Objects of its Dispensation, on whom *the Hands of such are to be laid*.

V. The manner of its due Application ; how to be performed. And,

VI. The Benefit of the Rite, subservient to that Religion whereof it is a Fundamental *Doctrine*.

I. *Inquire we concerning the Christian Doctrine* The *Do-*  
*ctrine* here meant by [*laying on of Hands*] which being *Strine* of  
one of the most Ancient Ceremonies recorded in *Confirma-*  
Scripture, was made use of on several occasions. *tion*,  
In the *Old Testament* we may observe it to be  
used, 1. In *Prayer*, wherein the Gesture is so  
Natural and Significant, that it is not only joined  
therewith, but sometimes instead, as sufficiently  
expressive thereof. Wherefore the Prophet *Jere-*  
*miah* exhorting to that Duty, saith, *Let us lift up* Lam. 3.  
*our Hearts with our [Hands] unto God in the Hea-* 41.  
*vens.* And the *Psalmist* Prays, *Let my Prayer be* Ps. 141. 4.  
*set forth before thee as Incense ; and the lifting up*  
*of my Hands as the Evening Sacrifice.* Yea, a  
most effectual Prayer of *Moses's* is only called a  
*spreading abroad his Hands unto the Lord.* 2. In *Exod. 9.*  
*Benediction*, which is the Posture wherein the Pa- 33.  
*laying*



triarch Jacob is described to us Blessing the Children of Joseph. And, 3. In creating Officers, in which manner Moses by Divine appointment, constituted Joshua his Successor when he was about to leave the World.

- Ham. An- From these three Uses of this Ceremony in the  
not. on Old Testament, it hath been observed that there  
1 Tim. 5. are three sorts of things in the New, to which al-  
22. so it is principally accommodated, viz. I. In Prayer,  
for the Cure of Diseases and Pardon of Sins.  
Mar. 6. 5. In which manner (upon the former occasion) our Saviour is recorded to have healed the Sick Folk in his own Country, and to have restored the Woman from her Eighteen Years Infirmary; as also St. Paul to have cured the Father of Publius of a Fever: And (upon the latter occasion) it was of very early and constant use in Absolving Penitents from Church Censures; who by laying on of Hands were very significantly and effectually reconciled and received again into favour.  
2. In Ordination, for the appointment of Church-  
Aet. 6. 6. Officers. After which manner St. Stephen and his Collegues were Consecrated; and Barnabas and  
— 13. 13. Saul, said to have been separated from the Work whereunto God had called them. And, 3. In Benediction, for both the Blessing of Infants before, in order to receive Baptism (in which respect it is conceived by some that our Saviour used it towards those Little Children brought unto him.)  
Mark 10. And for the Confirmation of the Adult after, in  
16. order to Seal their Baptism: And so this Ceremony is generally supposed to have been used by  
Aet. 19. St. Paul, when he laid his Hands on the Ephesian  
3. 6. Disciples, and is concluded to be the Doctrine meant in our Text; forasmuch as it is reckoned among the Fundamentals following next after Baptism:

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*Baptism*; and together therewith in the Discourse following in this Chapter, has its proper effect apportioned: *Illumination* not being more applicable, in the usual style of the Church to *Baptism*; than *tasting the Heavenly Gift*, and being made *partakers of the Holy Ghost*, is the Design of *Confirmation*. By the thing signified the Sign is here declared; and by the *Mystery* the Rite known. So that *laying on of Hands*, however an Equivocal Ceremony, yet is most likely to be here meant of *Confirmation*.

II. The Authority whereof is derived by some even from the Example and Doctrine of our Saviour himself; who, after he had been Baptized by John, was Confirmed also by the Descent of the Holy Ghost, from Heaven upon him. And afterwards in like manner, he taught *Nicodemus* (together with the Doctrine of Baptism by Water,) this by the Holy Ghost, also administered in Confirmation by *laying on of Hands*, though not instituted till after Christ's Ascension, because till then the Holy Ghost was not given. The which, tho' first given then without this Ceremony, by the immediate hand of God, Sealing the Baptism, and attesting the Religion into which the first Converts were entered thereby; yet it was not long before the Apostles were appointed to Minister in giving the Holy Spirit to the Newly Baptized; and then this Rite of *laying on of Hands* was Instituted; which God so remarkably approved, as therewith to communicate in Miraculous Measure, the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. And hence (tho' it falls short of becoming a Sacrament, as some would have it to be, because among other Reasons already accounted for, it was not expressly instituted by Christ himself, yet) it rightly

Its Authority.

Bp. Taylor on Confirmation.

Secl. 1.

Mat. 3.

16.

Joh. 3. 5.

Act. 8. 14.

&c.

Eph. 1.

13.

2 Cor. 1.

21, &c.

See XLV.

becomes a *Fundamental Doctrine of Christianity*, and is of *Divine Original*, and a *lasting Ministry* in the Church, and not only *Temporary* and *peculiar* to the Days of Miracles, but of *perpetual use* to the end of the World. And that extraordinary effects do not now follow, it is because they are not now necessary as they were at first. And because the greater *Gifts*, which are the saving *Graces* of the *Holy Ghost* are still communicable as much as ever, and have been collated through all succeeding Ages hereby. And if Christians are not wanting to themselves, their *Baptismal Grace* will be corroborated and established to them; and *Sanctification*, and *Faith*, and *Hope*, and *Love* be thereby promoted; which are standing *Graces*, abiding in the Church of Christ for ever, promised upon the Condition of *Prayer*, which is essential to this Ordinance. And it hath therefore been always esteemed as a proper means fitted to Spiritual purposes; coming from God, and Ministering in our way to him; whereby Spiritual assistances are conferr'd and assur'd in a more abundant measure. And to this sense hereof, both *Fathers* and *Councils* have given their Testimony, and never any sober *Protestant* rejected it.

The Per-  
sons Ad-  
mini-  
sting.

Act. 8. 14.  
Sc.

III. The Persons with whom the Ministry hereof is entrusted, are the *Bishops*. Who, as the Successors of the *Apostles* in the Government of the Church, are alone the Ministers of *Confirmation*, according to the constant *Practice* and *Doctrine* of the Primitive Catholick Church, derived from the *Example* and *Tradition* of the *Apostles*, and recorded in their *Acts*; where *St. Peter* and *St. John* were sent to Minister the *Holy Ghost* to them of *Samaria*, whom though *St. Philip* had converted and *Baptized*, he offered not to *Confirm*,  
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not being himself an *Apostle*, as they were, whose peculiar it was to collate the *Holy Ghost*, not to be usurp'd or meddled with, without a Special Commission from God, by any of an inferior Order. And though, there were other *Impositions of Hands* that were indifferently administered by Men of Holy Orders, yet hath this ever been so Sacredly reserved to, and practised by only the highest Order of Priesthood, that it is observed, *Never any Authentick Testimony could yet be produced out of Ecclesiastical History attesting the contrary*; and that those which have been offered, have been sufficiently proved, to be either Sur-reptitious, or else Alien to the Purpose. Whence the Name of *Bishoping* is a very proper Expression hereof, however used in Derision by some among us. It becoming only the Dignity of the highest Order in the Church, to be Entitled to the Dispensation of the most solemn *Paternal Benedictions*, whereby is recommended the Worth and Efficacy of the Holy Rite; as being apt to beget a greater Veneration for it in the Minds of devout People, and to make them expect nobler Effects from that Ordinance which none but the highest Minister of Religion can celebrate.

IV. *The Proper Objects of its Dispensation*, or the Persons on whom the *Hands* of such are to be laid, ought to be endued with these four Qualifications.

1. *They must be such only as have been already Baptized.* Confirmation being a Christian Ordinance; intended not to *Make*, but to *Establish Christians*; not to Supply the want of, but to *Consummate Baptism*. Which therefore it ought to follow; and was wont to be conferred on the Adult together therewith, as a necessary Appen-  
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age. and allyed thereto, yet a *Distinct Ordinance* therefrom, in pursuance of that great Vow, to the Observance whereof we are all so strictly bound.

Uncon-  
firmed.

2. *They must be such as have not been already Con- firm'd, tho' it be never so long since they were Baptized.* Because this *Rite* being an *Appendage to Baptism*, is no more to be repeated than *That* is; which being once Consummated hereby, cannot be more accomplished. Whence therefore, as from a *First Principle*, Christians are obliged (ac- cording to the *Apostle's* Exhortation before the *Text*) to *go on to Perfection*. Not laying again here- by, or desiring to desist and abide with only the *Foundation*, but to Edifie by the higher Mysteries, provided for further growth, and future Perse- verance in Religion. Neither ancient Practice, nor the known Design of the Institution, comply- ing with the ignorant Zeal of some, who have been observed to catch at all Opportunities, to have it repeated upon them.

Intelli-  
gent.

3. *Such, further, are alone qualified for Confir- mation, that are arrived to a competent Age.* Which is not to be determin'd by any set number of years, because of different Degrees of *Capacities*, and different manner of *Education*; but only by a Proficiency in requisite Knowledge. The sooner it is conferr'd on such, the better, after the State of Infancy and Non-age is over; even before Sin is too well understood or liked; that the Spirit of God may get the first Possession, and be early enough to prevent *Youthful Lusts*, and to secure the vast Advantage of an early Religion, yet, when the *Service* may be also *Reasonable*, the Profession voluntary, the Choice wiser, and the Assistances of Divine Grace begin to be more sensi-

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sensibly needed, and may be made better use of. For so it is now expressly required (however otherwise it was formerly practised in our own, or still is in any other Church) upon undeniable Reasons in that excellent *Preface* wherewith its Office begins, in the following words, viz. "To the end that *Confirmation* may be ministred to the more Edifying of such as shall receive it, the Church hath thought good to order, That none hereafter shall be *Confirmed*, but such as can say the *Creed*, the *Lord's Prayer*, and the *Ten Commandments*; and can also answer to such other Questions, as in the short *Catechism* are contained: Which Order is very convenient to be observed, to the end that Children being now come to years of Discretion, and having learned what their *Godfathers* and *Godmothers* Promised for them in *Baptism*, they may themselves with their own Mouth and Consent openly before the Church ratifie and confirm the same; and also Promise that by the Grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves steadfastly to observe such things as they by their own Confession have assented unto. Which serious *Admonition*, duely adverted to, would sufficiently both vindicate the *Honour*, and secure the *Benefit* of this Holy Rite, beyond the Danger of *Contempt* and fear of *Disappointment*, discouraging its Practice. Especially, considering also, That

Office of  
*Confirmation*.

Prepared.

4. Such as are to be *Confirmed* ought to be devoutly disposed for the Reception and Improvement thereof. For the sake whereof *Confirmation* is therefore ordered to be deferr'd to Years of Discretion, so long after *Baptism*: That what was then done without Consent, might now be ratified and owned therewith; and that the owning of.

of the *Baptismal Vow* might be as Solemn, as the making of it ought to have been where there is Capacity. And, therefore, the less Concern there was, or could be, when *Baptism* was conferr'd, the greater ought there to be express'd when *Confirmation* is desired. And, because That was given us, when we were *Infants*, upon the Faith and Engagement of others without our Knowledge in our Name, This ought to be prepar'd for, accepted and improved by us, in our own Persons, with the greater Care and Diligence; an Indisposedness for which will reflect Contempt upon *Baptism* it self, and turn one of the most useful Instruments of *Religion* into a meer Civil *Custom*, submitted to more for the sake of *Fashion* than with a Sense of *Devotion*. And therefore it is not a sufficient Qualification for this Ordinance, that the Person presented there-  
to hath been Baptized, was never before Confirmed, and is now arrived to *Years of Discretion*, unless also he hath employ'd, and evidenc'd his Discretion, in duely Capacitating himself to edifie by its Administration, there being a Necessity of peculiar Dispositions, in a peculiar Degree, for so particular a Favour, and solemn Service of Religion. To which, Direction must therefore be given, from our Consideration of,

Its Administration.

The Bishop's Performance.

Ritual.

V. The Performance of this Ceremony. Which consists of two Parts. The First belonging to the Bishop, the Latter to the Person to be Confirmed.

1. The Bishop's Performance herein is twofold. viz. Ritual and Spiritual. That consisting of Laying on of Hands, and This of offering up of Prayer therewith.

His Laying on of Hands is the Ritual, whereby the whole Mystery is signified in the Text, and was

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was all the Ceremony made use of on this occasion, in the Practice of the *Apostles*. To which primitive Simplicity, the Ceremony is now reduced in our Church. And the *Anointing with Oyl*, (which, in some Cases, was also anciently used therewith, and among some Christians is yet used, though very unwarrantably, instead thereof) is wholly laid aside; with the *Sign of the Cross* that was wont also to be made upon the Foreheads of them that were to be Confirmed. *Liturgy of King Edward VI.*

*The Anointing with Oyl* was a very ancient Rite used in the *Jewish Church*, to denote the conferring of Gifts or Graces upon Persons, thence, probably, as many other Usages were, derived into the *Christian Church*; and was once so generally used in this Office, as to give Denomination thereto; which by the Ancients is frequently called *The Chrism*; which yet not being of the Essence thereof, nor used by the *Apostles* themselves, is by the same Power of Liberty the Church ever had of setting it up, upon sufficient Authority now again omitted. *The Chrism.*

*The Signing with the Sign of the Cross* on the Forehead, as it hath been wholly left out of our later Offices, tho' without any express Prohibition of its continued Use; so ought it, nevertheless, not to be used again, upon any private Authority, and unless where it may be for Edification. But, *Cross.*

*The laying on of Hands*, is confessedly *Apostolical* *Imposition* and *Essential*; without which, *Confirmation* was *of Hands*. never known to be administered, till of late excluded to make room for more abundant Superstition in the Church of *Rome*. And though *Comber.* it is also observed, to have been anciently the manner of the *Bishop* to lay both his Hands a-cross on the Head of the *Confirmed*, not only in Imitation



Gen. 48. 14. tation of *Jacob*, but with allusion to the Death of *Christ*, in whom we believe, and from whom we receive the Holy Ghost ; yet is this also laid aside, since a *Simple Imposition* of them is alone significant enough of that *Grace, Protection* and *Donation* of Privileges intended and expected thereby; which alone, is all we can be sure is *Apostolical*; and hath been so regularly observed all along in the Church, that it alone hath given also a Name to the whole Office, called the *Imposition of Hands* by the most ancient Writers.

Spiritual  
Benediction  
and  
Prayer.

The *Spiritual Part* of the *Bishop's Performance* Accompanying this Ceremony is *Prayer*; Consisting of *Benediction* and *Petition*; whereon the Efficacy of the Rite depends; and whereof the *Laying on of Hands* is both a proper Solemnity and *Application*; they being not more aptly *lifted up* towards Heaven to bring down Blessings thence, than *let fall* and rested upon the People to apply and direct them to the proper and prepared *Subjects* thereof. For, the *Bishop's Hands* are not laid on Persons as a *Charm* or *Spell*, having any Virtue in themselves to benefit the *Confirmed*; but in Conformity to an *Apostolical Rite*, whereby *Spiritual Gifts* were wont to be begg'd from Heaven, and directed to *Humble Supplicants* on Earth. And therefore, what is hereby pretended to be done by them, is ascribed to God, and begg'd from his Bounty, whence every good and every perfect Gift doth come, whose Steward the *Bishop* Administering is, and only the Instrument to convey it to us; and whose *Prayer* and *Blessing* being offered with so ancient a Rite, Commemorating the most plentiful Donation vouchsafed, and now Supplicated from Heaven, consecrates the Performance and Commands a Veneration from all thereto.

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2. *The Performance required of Persons to be Confirmed is likewise Two-fold, viz. A solemn Stipulation, and Humble Supplication.*

*The solemn Stipulation consists of Two Parts, viz. A Consent to the Covenant made before in Baptism, and a Promise engaging to the Performance thereof.*

*A Consent to the Covenant made before in Baptism, is the most reasonable thing in the World to be solemnly Declared, as soon as Christians arrive to Years of Discretion; being what is neither Possible, nor Profitable, nor Just to be dispensed with. For the Covenant made in our Name at Baptism is of eternal Obligation, and binds our Consent, whether it be ever solemnly Declar'd, and taken upon our selves or no, because engaging to God's Commands, which are just and necessary to be observed; to which there is always an Obligation according to our Capacity; from which there can be no Discharge; and whereto, therefore, Consent is always owing of Necessity. Besides, that the greatest Privileges depending thereupon do merit Consent from the bare Consideration of Interest. And since the Conditions hereof could not be personally undertook by us, when we were Entitled thereto by Infant-Baptism, but were consented to in our Name by Others, and we thereupon then admitted, it is but requisite that, when God hath spared us to a Capacity, we publicly discharge our Sureties of that their Stipulation in kindness to us, and (now in Justice and Gratitude to them, as well as for the Satisfaction of the Church, whereof we, as Members, partake of those Priviledges,) take the Obligation wholly upon our selves, " Acknowledging our selves bound to believe and to do all those*

“ those things which our Godfathers and Godmothers  
 “ undertook for us. Whereby, Consent being de-  
 clared,

*Promising*     *A Promise Engaging to the Performances hereof is*  
*Perform-*     but necessarily annexed ; not only as a *Testimony*  
*mance.*     of the Sincerity of such *Consent*, but as a *Pledge*  
*Order of*     and Security of future *Fidelity*. And, therefore,  
*Confirma-*     it is also required from Persons to be *Confirmed*,  
*tion.*     that they, further, “ *Promise that, by the Grace*  
                   “ *of God, they will evermore endeavour themselves*  
                   “ *faithfully to observe such things, as they by their*  
                   “ *own Confession have assented unto.* And this *Pro-*  
                   *mise* they are to make both in the Presence of God,  
                   and in the Face of the whole Congregation ; Pre-  
                   senting, together with themselves, upon this Oc-  
                   casion, *One Godfather or Godmother*, as a Witness  
                   of their *Confirmation* ; for the greater Security, of  
                   their Sincerity, and to be a continual Monitor to  
                   them to keep their Vow.

*Rubrick*  
*after the*  
*Cate-*  
*chism.*

And this *Stipulation* thus declared by so so-  
 lemn a *Consent*, and sacred a *Promise*, cannot rea-  
 sonably be made by any that are not disposed  
 thereto, by a competent *Knowledge* of the Terms  
 to which they hereby own and promise their  
 Engagement ; by a stedfast *Faith* of the Truth,  
 and necessity of Gospel Blessings thence expected ;  
 by a deliberate *Examination* of their own Will,  
 and Freedom to make and keep their Covenant ;  
 and by a well grounded *Resolution*, through God's  
 help, to govern hereby the whole Course and  
 Business of their Lives. Which are the several  
 necessary *Christian Duties*, arising from this part  
 of the Performance, to qualifie for a due and  
 most profitable receiving of *Confirmation*. For  
 which Purpose, there was heretofore an old Or-  
 der that required a *Fast* to precede it. And  
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surely, then, this being so very weighty and serious an Employ, it is but necessary that, for its Completion, so solemn a *Stipulation* be accompanied also, (as was observ'd it is) with

*Humble Supplication*, corroborated by the *Supplication* of the Congregation, and the Ministration of the most Holy Order in the Church, engaging us to joyn therein, as with most fervent Zeal, and longing Desires, so to add thereto our continued Endeavours for *Perseverance*. Whereby such Prayers will not fail of Success, not only for God's *Acceptance* of this Service from us, but for *Ability* to perform the Vow we have renewed, and for the *Felicity* of obtaining the Blessings expected from him: That as we date the period of our *Publick Christian Profession* hence, so we hereby provide for the future Course of our Life, *that it may be according to this Beginning*, a continual Progress towards Perfection.

And surely a Rite so Holy; establish'd on so good *Authority*; dispens'd by so eminent a *Person*; receiv'd by so capable *Subjects*, in so solemn and important *Performances*, can be neither *Insignificant* nor *Indifferent*. And therefore, to urge now an hearty Observation hereof, Consider we,

VI. Lastly, *The Benefit of this Rite*, in Subservience to that Religion, whereof it is a Fundamental *Doctrine*, which is *Two-Fold*; Ministring either to the Service of the Church in General, or to the Interest of its *Members in particular*, to the Promotion of Religion in the World.

I. *In Respect to the Service of the Church in General*; this Rite of Confirmation tends greatly to the Promotion of Religion, especially in the two following Particulars.

*Its Benefit.*  
To the Church in General.



Being  
Serviceable to both  
Sacraments.

To Baptism.

1. *It is an useful Administration to the Interest of both the Sacraments.* On the due Observation whereof the Welfare of the *Christian Church*, and the *Outward Profession of Religion* greatly depend, and are effectually vindicated hereby from the common, though unreasonable Prejudices they are exposed to.

For *Baptism*, as 'tis now generally administred to *Infants*, is not a little vindicated from that Opposition and Contempt some have unreasonably conceived against it, by the right use of *Confirmation*; whereby it is intended to be seasonably *Consummated*, and its Obligation made *Personal*, *Strict* and *Publick*; and not only every way answerable to the pretended Advantages of *Baptizing the Adult*, but much preferable thereto; as consisting with the Benefit of *Baptism* against the Danger of Death, and withal providing for the same Security of its *Obligation*, as they can pretend to, who defer it till Riper Years; and being, however, far less Exceptionable than *Rebaptization* (instead whereof it was, of Old, by the Decree of several *Councils* ordered to be used) which is sufficient to confute the Clamours of all its Adversaries.

To the  
Lord's  
Supper.

Last Rubrick at  
the end of  
the Office.

And so for the other Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*. It would appear to be needlessly, and unjustly reflected on from the *Unworthiness* of *Communicants* said to be admitted, without previous Examination, or due Care thereto, were *Confirmation* made (as it is appointed) the necessary *Introduction* to it; this giving all reasonable Security, and better than what any of those, who are mostly prejudiced hereby against our *Communion*, are provided with, or do ordinarily make use of, for the Interest and Honour,

of

of that most sacred Ordinance, and the Purity of Christian Assemblies to it.

So that as *Confirmation* thus looks backward upon *Infant-Baptism*, and forward upon the *Lord's Supper*, it Instrumentally and Considerably serves the Interest of both, vindicates our Churches Constitutions, and undenyably recommends its own Usefulness. Especially, since also,

2. *It is an Excellent Preservative of the Churches* *Preserv-*  
*Peace and Union.* As it puts all her Members, *ing Peace*  
early, under the safest Conduct; under the Hands *and Uni-*  
and Authority of the chief Officers and Mini- *on.*  
sters thereof, delivering the first Seizin and Pos-  
session of them, out of the way and reach of Evil  
Guides; and personally engaging them, with an  
earnest of publick Prayers and Benediction, as  
Fellow-Members, admitted and joyn'd in Com-  
munion together, within the Pale of the Church.  
Which is the best Course that can be taken to  
prevent the straying of *Christ's Flock*, and to save  
Men from falling into *Schism* and *Herese*, by lay-  
ing a good *Foundation* at first (whereof this *Do-*  
*ctrine* in the *Text* is reckon'd an Essential part)  
for want of which they remain always wavering  
and unsettled, and looking on themselves at Li-  
berty, are easily seduced and carried about by eve- *Eph. 4. 14.*  
ry wind of *Doctrine*.

So useful an Institution, for the good of the Church in *General*, towards the Establishment of her *Constitutions* and *Unanimity*, whereon the Suc-  
cess of Religion depends, may *Confirmation* be  
easily hence argued to be; and therefore worthy,  
for the sake hereof, of all due Observance and our  
utmost Encouragement. But,

2. *In Respect also, to the Interest of the Members* *Its Bene-*  
*of the Christian Church in Particular,* this Rite is *fit to par-*  
*ricular*  
much *Members.*

much more apparently Instrumental of personal Holiness, upon these *Two Accounts*, viz. Because, 1. It is a *Means* of spiritual Strength to perform Duty. And, 2. It is a *Motive* to use and improve such Means for this end.

*A Means to an Holy Life.*

Luk. 24. 49.

Heb. 11. 34.

See the Office for Confirmation.

1. *Confirmation is a Means of Spiritual Strength to perform Duty.* It being that very *Rite*, whereby (as was hinted) that *Power from on high* (which was foretold by our Lord, and first descended at *Pentecost*) was afterwards ministred, and not only express'd in *speaking with Tongues* and doing *Miracles*, while the Service of the Church required it, but was also, manifest'd in internal Grace, that Sanctified the Heart, and made the Life fruitful of good Works, in a greater measure. Insomuch that the *Apostles* themselves are observed to have been timorous in *Faith*, until they were Confirmed at *Pentecost*; and then they waxed valiant in *Fight*, turned to flight the *Armies of the Aliens*. And therefore, as in *Baptism* we undertook to do our Duty, so in *Confirmation* we receive Strength to do all that was then undertaken for us: That we being made *Innocent* and cleansed from Sin by the *Spirit* given us in the one, may become *Gracious* and adorned with heavenly Vertues by an *Increase* of the *Spirit* given us in the other. And although the *Spirit* doth go along with the *Water* in Christian *Baptism*, yet the *Apostles* thought it necessary to lay their *Hands* on the *Baptized*, that they might receive the *Spirit* in greater measure afterwards; which hath been ever since, generally, esteem'd to be the peculiar Blessing of this *Rite*, and believed to be given by it. And therefore, as in the *Prayer* immediately preceding it we are obliged to be *Thankful* for our *Baptismal Grace* of *Regeneration* and

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and *Remission*, so to *Petition* also for the *Graces* of *Confirmation*, there reckon'd to be, "*The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding ; the Spirit of Counsel and Ghostly Strength ; the Spirit of Knowledge and true Godliness ; together with the Spirit of God's Holy Fear*, which all need in pursuance of that former *Mercy*. And though those *Graces* may, possibly, be obtained without *Confirmation*, seeing the *Spirit of God* cometh (as the *Wind bloweth*) where, and which way it listeth, yet are we tyed to use his own *Oeconomy*, and to expect the *Blessings* appointed by his own *Ministeries*, to which the *Divine Promise* is annexed, whereby others have received them, and every one of which ought to be used in their *Season*, as a proper opportunity of succeeding. And we coming therefore, to make a solemn *Profession* of our *Religion* ; and to *Dedicate* our selves to the *Service* of *God* by this *Holy Rite*, with earnest *Desires*, and a longing *Soul*, with firm *Faith*, and a well assured *Hope*, with a pure *Heart* and *Mind* prepared for the *Reception* of the *Holy Ghost*, it is not to be doubted but *God* will hear his own *Servants*, gratifie our *Desires*, and pour down upon us thereby the abundance of his *Grace*, to give *Strength* thenceforward to overcome both the *Inward Corruption of Nature*, and the *Outward Temptations of the World and the Devil*, to enable us to continue firm in the *Faith* of *Christ*, and in the *Obedience* of his *Commands*, to preserve us always from the *Dominion of Sin*, and to bring us safe at last unto the *Kingdom of Glory*. Joh. 3. 8.

Such an effectual Instrument of the Means of *Grace* and *Salvation*, to make Men *Holy* and *Happy*, is this *Apostolick Institution*, if it be not frustrated by their own wilful *Neglect*, and wick-



ed Perverfeness. And yet to prevent this, it self is Provision, as much as need or can be had; since as we have said,

*A Motive  
to use the  
Means.*

2. *It is moreover a Motive to use and improve the Means it Administers for that end:* Because, it obliging Persons to undertake for themselves what before was promised for them by others, necessitating them to ratifie all that hath been done for them already, and requiring them to Promise the same things over again, in the most deliberate, Solemn and Publick manner, in the Presence of God, and before the whole Congregation, in their own Persons; this must needs add to the Sacredness of their *Baptismal Vow*, testifie to their Sincerity in designing to perform their *Promise*, whereby it had been covenanted by others for them in haste the Hainousness of the *Guilt* of every future Breach thereof, tend mightily to strengthen good *Resolutions*, and give all possible Assurance of a Christian *Perseverance*. For the *Vow*, being doubled, will be likely to tye the faster, and hold the longer to Duty; the *Promise* whereof, being made personal, may be more confidently trusted to, and will be less capable of being shifted off, or excused; the *Guilt* of Sin, being hereby aggravated, will look more frightful, and be likely to be both shun'd at greater distance, and repented of more effectually; *Resolutions*, being strengthened, will not so soon or easily decay; and *Perseverance*, being voluntarily obliged to, will be sure not only to seem less *Indifferent* and *Severe*, but probably become more *Natural* and *Profitable*. So that a more effectual and proper *Motive*, to improve by all the Assistances of the Holy Spirit is not to be thought of: Neither can a *Religious Vow*, which all own to be both a *Natural* and *Christian Duty*,  
for

for the Establishing of wavering Minds, and securing Men in that Course of Life they have undertaken, be made more acceptably to God, or advantageously to themselves, than in a due Reception of *Confirmation*.

Let none therefore, hence despise our just Vindications of the Authority, and Veneration for the Usefulness of this *Holy Rite*; since herein we do but express our Zeal for the Cause of Religion, and endeavour to recommend a sacred Ordinance, and proper Instrument thereof, requisite to perfect a *Christian*.

Let such, hence, of what Age or Condition soever they be, who are already arrived to *Years of Discretion*, consider seriously the Sin they persist in, of a contemptuous Neglect of the *Means* of becoming more Religious, and no longer defer earnestly to desire and prepare for the obtaining hereof.

Let those who are Designed, or do Intend and Desire obediently to submit to this serious Institution, sedulously endeavour to qualify themselves, in the mean time, duely for it; and, when opportunity offers, apply themselves thereto, with the most profound Devotion, and Holy Reverence; and receive it, not for *Fashion's*, or *Company's* sake, nor yet only as a Mark and Badge to distinguish a *Party*, but as a Divine *Help* and *Obligation* to become better Men, more Humble, more Charitable, more spiritual Christians, and strictly *Holy in all manner of Conversation*. And for this end, also,

Let all *Parents* and *Sureties*, who stand bound by the *Baptismal-Vow* to see to the Christian Institution of Children, be importunately Solicitous to discharge themselves thereof duely here-

by, as a Duty indispensably incumbent upon them, and the greatest Benefit that can be done both to one and the other.

Let also, *Ministers* faithfully endeavour to Instruct and Dispose all under their *Cure*, to receive seasonably the same; as greatly furthering hereby the Success of their future *Labours*, and clearing that great *Account*, they all have one Day to render to God of their Sincerity herein. And Finally.

Let all who have been already *Confirmed*, thankfully own the Mercy; encourage others to Desire and Prize it; wish well to all that receive it; and remain always mindful of the Obligations to improve by it in a suitable Conversation; Holding fast the Profession of their Faith without wavering. . . . Considering one another, to provoke unto Love and good Works. . . . Lest, if they Sin wilfully after that they have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remain no more Sacrifice for Sins; but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which will devour such Incorrigible Adversaries, as tread underfoot the Son of God, and count the Blood of the Covenant wherewith they were Sanctified an unholy thing, and do Despite unto the Spirit of Grace. And therefore,

Heb. 10.  
23, &c.

Collect  
for the  
18th Sun-  
day after  
Trinity.

‘ Lord, We beseech thee, Grant thy People  
‘ Grace to withstand the Temptations of the  
‘ World, the Flesh and the Devil, and with  
‘ pure Hearts and Minds to follow thee the  
‘ only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
‘ Amen.

S E R.

# SERMON XLIX.

## ON THE

# LORD'S SUPPER.

Luke xxii. 19, 20.

*And he took Bread, and gave Thanks, and brake it, and gave it unto them, saying, This is my Body which is given for you, This do in Remembrance of me.*

*Likewise also the Cup after Supper, saying, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood, which is shed for you.*

**T**HE Doctrine of Baptism, and of Laying on of Hands, having been premised, this of the other Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is rightly introduced. Concerning the first Institution whereof, these words present us with the *History*; Describing its *Nature* both as to its *Parts* and *End*.

The *Parts* of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, The *Nature* of the are both *Outward*, which is the *Sign*; and *Inward*, which is the *thing Signified*.

Lord's  
Supper as  
to its  
The *Parts*.



The Outward Part, or Sign, our Catechism from our Text, teacheth us to be Bread and Wine which the Lord hath commanded to be received. For, he took Bread . . . Likewise also the Cup . . . &c.

The Inward Part, or thing Signified, is the Body, and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper. Our Saviour saying, (when he gave Thanks, and Brake and gave the Bread,) This is my Body which is given for you: And, (after also he had consecrated the Cup) adding, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood, which is shed for you.

Its end.

The End of which Institution is in our Catechism also taught us to be for the continual Remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ and the Benefits which we receive thereby, because in the Text it is not only said, Do this in Remembrance of me, but also intimated that such Doing is meant to be in Confirmation of a Covenant procured by the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ in order to our Benefit; This Cup being said to be the New Testament [or Covenant] in Christ's Blood shed for us.

So that what our Catechism thus teaches us concerning the Nature of this Sacrament, is but a Comment on our Text; both which will, therefore necessarily be Explain'd and Improved together in this Discourse; considering it,

I. As to its Parts; which as a proper Sacrament are Outward and Inward.

The Outward parts are the Elements of

I. The outward Part, or Sign of the Lord's Supper, is Bread and Wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received: For he took Bread, . . . likewise also the Cup, . . . &c. The one to be Eat

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the other to be *Drank*. And therefore herein is to be distinguish'd both the *Elements* themselves and the *Actions* concurring to make up the *Outward Part or Sign of the Lord's Supper*.

1. The *Elements* are positively determined to <sup>only</sup> *Bread and Wine*; [only] and equally to [Both] of <sup>Bread and Wine.</sup> them.

That only *Bread and Wine* are fixt upon is evident; because these and no other *Elements* were made use of in this Institution. Which however unlikely and odd *Memorandums* of what is to be signified thereby in this *Sacrament*; presenting neither the *Picture* nor *Image* of any one *Lineament of Christ* whom we are to remember hereby; and being such a *token* as never any one before or since thought fit to be remembred or honoured by in their Absence; yet being Divinely appointed, as this usage ought not to be disputed but received, so to be concluded the contrivance of Infinite Wisdom, most suitable and proper for what it is intended. And that probably, it would have been both unsafe and unfit, and no ways conducing to the *Spiritual End* intended in this *Sacrament* to have indulged a more lively representation of a *Saviour* to us; since any other might have occasioned *Idolatry* to the Ignorant, and this is capable of contributing to the Service of *Religion* among the considerate; partly enough representing the *Union* intended to be ratified by this Holy Rite both between *Christ* and his *Disciples*, and in him, among *themselves*; and also the *Sufferings* undergone by him in order thereto.

For *Bread* being made up of many Grains into one Loaf, and *Wine* of many Grapes mixt into one Cup; and these, also, being things that are

are vulgarly known to have passed through much Bruisings and rough Handlings e'er they come to be perfected, are Natural enough to put us in mind both of the *one* and the *other*. Besides, there is a general *usefulness* of these *Elements* to our necessary nourishment, without which we are not able to subsist by any other Enjoyments. *Bread* being the *Staff of Life*, and *Wine* the *Chearer of Man's Heart*; they are certainly no very improper Representatives of him *in whom* is our *Life*, and *without whom* we can *have no Life*. These moreover are *Similar Bodies*, every Part whereof may as much represent what is intended as *any*: And altogether they make *one Body* of the same sort; easily *separated*, and fitter to be *divided*, yet so as all may *Communicate* in the same thing. They are of continual Service; and what *Melchizedeck* brought out to *Abraham* as a part of his Blessing, and as a signification (as some interpret it) of this *Sacrament* which *God* would have *Abraham's Seed* to feed upon, when the true *High Priest* after that Great Man's *Order* should come. However, 'tis certain these were part of the *Jews Passover*, when *Christ* was Typically eaten in *Egypt*; and were fitter to be retained than the *Flesh* thereof, since *Christ* being come, all *Sacrifices* were to cease, and no more *Blood* to be shed for *Sin*. And it is not to be forgotten, finally, how agreeable these things are to what *Christ* resembled himself while on the *Earth*; calling himself the *Vine*, whereof his *Disciples* are the *Branches* to bring forth *Fruit* by vertue derived from him: And the *Bread of Life* which came down from *Heaven*, for the *Support* and *Nourishment* of *Souls*, as the *Manna* in the *Wilderness* was *Food from Heaven* for the *Body*.

For

1 John 5.  
12.

Joh. 15.1.

Joh. 6.35.

For which and the like Reasons the agreeableness of these *Elements* determined to such use, seems satisfactorily enough apparent, so as to exclude all use of any other in this *Rite*, whereto they are thus appropriated.

2. And wherein as *both are equally used*, so ought *neither to be omitted*. *Bread* is not sufficient alone, nor is *Wine* instituted alone, neither are *Both* promiscuously and together allowed to represent the Grace of this *Rite* Sacramentally: Because the *Precept* and *Example* of Christ, in its Institution, are for both distinctly; and both alike were so bequeathed, as a *Legacy*, by the last Will and Testament of our Lord, confirmed by the Death of the Testator; without a Violation whereof one cannot be with-held. Neither can the *Sacrament* be compleat without both; *One* only not answering the end of its Institution, wherein both were equally admitted; *Bread broken* being peculiarly significative of the *Body*, and *Wine poured out* no less of the *Blood* of Christ; and whereby as manifest a Separation between the *Body and Blood of Christ* is intended to be represented in the *Sacrament*, as was made of them upon the *Cross*; and thereby two distinct and separate Acts, of *Eating* and *Drinking* are required in the participation thereof. To which all having an equal right, they ought to be equally administred to all. Whereof the *Apostles* first received, no otherwise than as Representatives of the whole Church; without either of which *Elements* it would be but an uncouth *Feast*: Both which St. Paul taught the *Corinthians* to retain, as he had learnt it from Christ himself: According whereto was the Practice of the *Catholick-Christian Church* for a Thousand



Joh. 6. sand Years; and no good Reason can be alledged why *One* rather than the *Other* should be omitted; since where *Christ* speaketh of *Eating* only, the passage is not either meant of this Ordinance, or not exclusively of *Drinking* also. And as to the mention made of only *Breaking of Bread* from Act. 2. 42. *House to House*, either there is no necessity of tying these Words to such Sense, (being equally capable of two different Interpretations) or else a necessity of understanding a *Synecdoche* in them, importing (according to the Hebrew Phrase of expressing it) *making of a Meal*, which is not to be supposed to exclude *Drinking*, especially seeing the *Apostles* were concerned herein themselves, who as *Priests* had an unquestioned right to the *Cup* also. All which hints, duly considered, will yield sufficient Argument against, and Confutation of the Unreasonable, Sacrilegious Practice in the Church of *Rome*; where this *Sacrament* is Administred only in *one kind*, and consequently not at all, to the *Laity*, the *Cup* being allowed only to the *Priests*.

And this shall suffice to have been said concerning the *Elements* themselves; both as to their *Suitableness* and *Use*, (it being better not to mention than to puzzle our selves with other Niceties, concerning the *want* or *kind*, or *mixture* hereof; having no Relation either to our Practice or Edification) as they are the *Outward Part*, or *Sign* representing in the *Lord's Supper*.

The Actions. 2. The other thing we are to distinguish herein is the *Actions* concurring to make up and compleat the *Outward Part* hereof, employed about these *Elements*, and termed the *Sings Applying*, which are of two sorts, viz. Of the Minister who in the *Text* was our *Saviour* himself; and

and of the *Communicants*, who were at this *first Institution* only the *Apostles*, as then Representatives of the whole *Church*.

The *Actions* of our *Saviour*, representing the *Ac-*  
tions of God himself towards Mankind in the Dispensation of the *Thing signified* by these Signs; and here Instituted to be afterwards used by all *Ministers* in the Celebration of this *Holy Rite*, are evidently these *Four*, viz.

*A Taking* of these *Elements*, to wit, in his Hands, *Taking.*  
and probably from off that Table whereon they were placed, so as to separate them from the rest left there for common Use. Signifying and Representing God's Sealing and Setting apart the Person of *Christ* for the great work of Mediation between himself and Man.

*A Giving Thanks*, or (as *St. Matthew* and *St. Mark* express it, in the parallel Places to our *Text*) *Blessing* the *Elements*, whereby they became actually sanctified into a *Sacrament*, and useful for that End for which they were appointed. Signifying and Representing God's *sending of his Son* in the *Fulness of Time* to perform and execute the Office of a *Mediator*, unto which he was ordained.

*A Breaking of the Bread*, in Conformity to what was done to that used in the *Passover*, and to prepare it for Distribution. Signifying and Representing the bitter *Passion* and *Suffering* of our *Saviour*; the breaking of his Heart by Sorrow, and wounding of his Body by the Nails and Spear, which let out his Precious Blood, an Offering for our Sins. And, finally,

*Giving*, and Distributing to the *Communi-*  
cants; as willing to part with, that they might partake in, what had been *Separated, Consecrated,*  
and

and Prepared for their sake. Signifying and representing the Offering of Christ to all, even Hypocrites as well as Believers, but the giving him only to the worthy and true Christians for Spiritual Health and Comfort.

Of the  
Communi-  
cants.

2. The Actions of the Communicants, also, herein are these two, viz. The Taking and Receiving the Elements into their Hands : To Signifie and Represent their Apprehension of Jesus Christ by Faith. And the Eating the one and Drinking the other ; whereby they Digest and Concoct them, so that they grow into their Bodies, To Signifie and Represent the effectual, particular, and special Application of Christ unto the Soul ; that their True, Spiritual, Real Union and Participation with him may become more near and sensible.

So that we see, that all these Actions employed in this Mystery are of excellent Use and Significancy to stir up Devotion and assist the Understanding in apprehending that great thing, of which all these are but the Signs and Type Signifying and Applying, viz.

The inward Part  
is the Body  
and Blood of  
Christ taken  
and received.

2. The Inward Part, or Thing Signified hereby : And that is the Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper. Our Saviour in the Text saying, (when he Blest, and brake, and Distributed the Bread) This is my Body which is given for you : And (after he had consecrated the Cup) also adding, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood which is shed for you. Not as if Christ's Body and Blood were carnally present in these Elements ; but only Signified and Represented to us by them ; whereof they are the Sign to us ; and whereby are Communicated all those saving Graces purchased by them to the worthy Receiver.

And

And therefore, Christ calls the *Signs* by the name of the *Things signified*; not changing the *Nature*, but adding hereby only *Grace* unto the *Nature* of them; so that a *real Presence* is not to be sought in the *Elements*, but in the worthy *Communicants*. For, Christ says first, *Take and Eat* (what he had *Broken* and *Given*) and then after that saith, *This is my Body*. Intimating that before we *take and eat*, it is not the *Body of Christ* unto us; But that when we *take and eat* as we ought, then he gives us his whole self, and puts us into possession of all such *Saving Graces* as his *Sacrificed Body* can yield, and our *Souls* do then need; whereof the *Sacramental Bread and Wine* is the *Outward Sign*. And therefore as there is no *Necessity* of *Interpreting* those words *Literally*, so is there a great deal of *Reason* of *Understanding* them only in such a *Figurative* Sense in *Opposition* both to the *Lutheran* gross *Notion* of *Consubstantiation*, and the *Romish* monstrous *Doctrine* of *Transubstantiation*. That offering no less *Violence* to *Reason* than this to *Sense* and both to the *genuine Meaning* of the *Text*. For,

By the *First* we are required to believe that the very *Body and Blood of Christ* are so united to the *Bread and Wine* in the *Lord's Supper*, as to make up one *Compound*; received at once by one *Sacramental Action*. Which improperly supposes that *Christ's* words of *Institution* must necessarily be understood *Literally*, and falsely thence infers that this only can be the meaning of them. Whereas their *Figurative* Sense only is consistent with the *Nature* of a *Body*, that cannot be in many *Places* at once, nor in the same *Place* with any other *Body* (which are absurdities this *Notion* includeth)



includeth) and in *Literal* meaning being made use of do Authorize no more *Consubstantiation* than *Transubstantiation*.

Nor Tran-  
substanti-  
ally.

Whereby the Church of Rome also would make us believe that the *Bread and Wine* in this Sacrament are not only the the Sign of the *Body and Blood of Christ*, But become the very thing it self. Whereas these Words of the Institution are, we see capable of another Meaning; and are not capable of this gross Meaning, even in the Sense of all our Adversaries themselves, as to *One* of the Parts of the Outward Sign, and by some of the best Learned of them, is ingenuously acknowledged to be equally incompatible to both. And a great deal of Reason there is it should be so; since such like *Figurative* Expressions are so very usual in Scripture, and accounted no way prejudicial either to the *Plainness* or *Propriety* of Language: And especially here, where the words understood *Literally* are neither *Sense* nor *Truth*; or however, such a Truth as hath not been always the constant belief of the *Christian Church*. Neither the Name nor the Thing of *Transubstantiation* being heard of among the *Ancients* for more than the first Five Hundred Years after *Christ*: And if was not opposed with more Noise, when it was first heard of there, it can be imputed to nothing more than to the general Ignorance and gross Superstition of that Age it took the Advantage of. And no Church (however pretending to *Infallibility*) can have Authority to obtrude at any time, a new Article of Faith upon *Christians* at Pleasure; so as to make Religion *uncertain* and *endless*, and perswade People out of their Senses, to magnifie the Power of a Priest in working a Miracle incapable e-

ver

ver to be proved one. And much more reasonably rejected for its infinite *Scandal* and monstrous *Absurdities*.

Even *Scandalous* for its *Stupidity*, that attracts the Scorn and Hatred of Atheists and Infidels, because of its *Barbarousness*, that Humanity loaths and condemns; and because of its *Bloody Consequences*, that hath occasioned the Acting of the most cruel and dolorous Tragedies that ever appeared in the World, in the Death of more *Christians* than ever was occasion'd by all the other Articles of Religion put together: Besides, the Danger of *Idolatry* not to be hazarded upon such evident and insuperable uncertainty.

And no less *absurd*, for its absolute contradictoriness to *Reason* and *Sense*, and utter Extirpation of the very *Evidence* of all Religion; whereby all certainty is invalidated; and nothing we see to be believed, upon better evidence, to be true, than that this Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* is false. It utterly frustrating the Evidence of *Sense*; the Authority of which our *Saviour* made it his first care to settle, by his Ap-<sup>Luke 24.<sup>2</sup></sup> peal thereto, after his Resurrection. And there-<sup>38.</sup> fore he that believes *Transubstantiation*, must necessarily believe (says one) these two things, viz. *That the last thing our Saviour did before his Death, was to teach his Disciples not to believe their own Senses; and that the first thing he did after he was risen from the Dead, was to teach them the quite contrary.* All which laid together and duly considered, cannot but gain our assent to what the same *Great Man* hath so Remarkably and (without Divine Inspiration) Prophetically said upon this Subject, *That this Doctrine is like*

A.B. Tiltonson.

a Mill-Stone hung about the Neck of Popery, which will sink it at the last. Amen.

And thus have we considered the Nature of this Sacrament in its Parts, both Outward and Inward, proceed we to consider it also,

*The end of the Lord's Supper.* II. As to its End; in order to know the meaning of thus feeding on such Elements, to distinguish it from an ordinary Repast, and discern the Lord's Body herein.

1 Cor. 11. 29.

And, as for this purpose, we are taught in our Catechism, that it is for the continual Remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, and the Benefits which we receive thereby; So in the Text, it is commanded that we do this in Remembrance of Christ, and intimated that we hereby confirm the Covenant made by the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, for our Benefit and Advantage; and therefore the Cup is called the New Testament in Christ's Blood, which is shed for us: So that the Ends of this Sacrament are principally these two, viz. A Commemoration of our Saviour; and a ratification of a League or Covenant with him.

*A Commemoration of Christ's*

1. To Eat Bread and Drink Wine, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is a Commemoration of Christ. This is expressed in the Text to be one end of the Institution, and corresponds to the Design of the Pascal Supper, among the Jews, which was its Type, and in the room whereof it succeeds as a Memento of a greater Deliverance wherewith to possess our Minds; and whereof a Feast hath long, by common usage, been esteemed no improper instrument; whereby our Lord, therefore, will also be remembered by us in this manner.

And to be capable of doing this, it ought to be distinctly considered, both what things of Christ we

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we are hereby put in mind of; and in *what manner* we are to endeavour to *Remember* them of him.

1. *The principal things this Feast is designed to put us in mind of*, may be reduced to these three particulars; even the *Mystery of Christ's Incarnation*, the *Holiness of his Life and Conversation*, and the *Meritoriousness of his Passion*.

1. *The Mystery of Christ's Incarnation*, is represented by the visible Signs of the Corporeal Elements used in this Sacrament. Which would no way be properly figured hereby, were it not to mind us of the truth of *Christ's Humanity*, and of the *Word's being made Flesh*; the *Staff of whose Life is Bread*. And which therefore with wonder and joy, we reflect on and proclaim by our Sacramental use hereof. Incarnati-  
on. Joh. i. 14.

2. *The Holiness of Christ's Life and Conversation*, *Holy Life*, cannot but occur with a Remembrance of his Person, for which he was so eminent and memorable; the representation of whose *Body and Blood* by these Sacramental Signs, naturally leads our Reflections to the remembrance not only that once there was such an one, but *what he is to us*; How faithful a *Law-giver and Teacher*! How Gracious a *Lord and Master*! How Holy and Exemplary his *Life*! How Just, Profitable and Pleasant his *Laws*! How *thankful*, it concerns us to be for them! And how truly *grieved* that we have had no more regard for them. But especially in fine,

3. *The Meritoriousness of Christ's Passion*, is most *livelily displayed*, to be commemorated, in this Holy Rite, by *Bread broken*, and *Wine poured forth*, and both separately Distributed and Received; that it may never be forgot, how his vital Blood was emptied from his Heart, and



Veins, and *Body* reduced to a Dead Carcase for our sakes; and by *Eating* and *Drinking* whereof  
 I Cor. II. we do therefore shew forth our Lord's Death till he  
 II, 26. come; keeping up this Rite as an *Obelisk* to the eternal Memory of the Passion of the Son of God, as a *Pyramid* of everlasting Duration to perpetuate in the Church a solemn memorial of our Lord's Death; looking upon our selves, as put by our approaches hereto, into the Circumstances of those who did actually behold our Saviour hanging upon the Cross, Bleeding and Dying for our Sins, and for our Sakes; exerting our Thankfulness for his Love, and Penitence for our Guilt.

These are the principal things, intended by this *Sacrament* to be remembered by us of *Christ*.

2. The manner wherein we are to endeavour to remember them of him, implies the Engagement of our Affections herein, and the intention of our Wills to publish and propagate the Knowledge hereof, Remembrance importing both a Recording, or Registring its impression in the Mind and Heart, and a Solemn Declaration, and Report of its Fame abroad; even so Remembering the Incarnation, and Life, and Passion of *Christ* hereby, that we may never forget him our selves, and that every Body else may be mindful of him.

Affectio-  
nately.

These things, therefore, are hereby to be Remembered by us of *Christ*, so as the impression thereof may sink upon our Hearts, and move our Affections so as to influence our Lives; which is the end and perfection of Remembrance. A dead Image of *Christ* upon the Mind, without Life, is gastly and useless. And cold and pale Thoughts, which have no feeling of themselves, nor leave  
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any Footsteps or Memorials behind them, are but the Picture of *Remembrance*, without the thing it self. And therefore, then only is *Christ* truly *Remembred* hereby, when he is formed in the Heart, and moves and acts the Soul, and draws out the Affections after him, and hath his Image reflected upon him, in all those Christian Graces and Vertues, wherein he hath exemplified himself to us.

Nor are we only to *Influence our selves*, but to *Openly Inform and Excite others* by this Memorial of our Lord; Publishing his *Incarnation, Life and Passion* hereby to all the World, according to St. Paul's *1 Cor. 11.* Expression of it, *shewing the Lord's Death till He Come.* Making open Profession of our Belief and Hope in him *before Man*; and pleading his Merits for us hereby *before God*. That as *Men seeing this our Good Work, they may* be thereby induced to *Glorify with us our Heavenly Father*; so *God looking upon it, may remember the Sacrifice of his own Son for us, to grant the Grace and Pardon with all other Benefits thereof, hereby represented to us, and expected from him.* And upon this Account only, hath this Action obtained the Name of a *Sacrifice* among the Ancients, whereof it is a *Memorial*, and wherewith *Prayer and Thanksgivings* are continually offered; which yet is not to be had as a proper *Propitiatory Sacrifice* (as it is falsely esteemed, and used by the Church of Rome,) not only upon the account of all those Arguments alledged against *Transubstantiation* (for themselves acknowledged, that those Reasons which destroy *One*, must necessarily overthrow the *Other*) but because likewise it is so much besides the Design of our Lord in his *Institution* hereof, so opposite to the Sence and Doctrine of the *Scriptures*; so

Matt. 5.

16.

Not by a  
Propitia-  
tory Sacri-  
fice.

Inconsistent with the Notion of such a *Sacrifice* (being *Unbloody*, and *often offered*). Incompatible to; the *Present State* of our Lord; Derogatory to his *Sacrifice* he once made of *himself* upon the *Cross*; and contrary to the Practice of the *Apostles*, and Sence of the *First Christians*. Which, therefore, is used by us, as a *Commemoration*, and not *Sacrifice* of our *Saviour*, according to one end of its Institution.

*A Ratification of a Covenant,*

*between God and Us,*

2. The other End whereof is for the *Ratification of a League and Covenant*. The Lord's Supper being a *Federal Rite*, uniting us to God, and to one another. Therefore,

1. *We are intended to eat Bread, and drink Wine in this Sacrament in Confirmation of the New Covenant between God and Us*, purchased by the Death of *Christ*, and first entered into by our *Baptism*. For so much the *General Nature of Sacraments* doth fairly intimate.

The end whereof is to Devote us to God's Service, and to Entitle us to his Promises of *Grace*, whereof these are the *Means of Conveyance*, and *Pledges to assure us thereof*. So much the using of so considerable an *Act of Worship*, reasonably supposes; it being no otherwise to be Communicated in, than as an *Earnest*, whereby we acknowledge *Christ's Religion*, and engage our selves therein intirely to him. This, further, the *Eating and Drinking at God's Table* more plainly declares; whereby less cannot be professed, than that we are of God's Family, Retainers to *Christ*, in Friendship and Society with him. Which likewise the very words of *Institution* intend to signify. Forasmuch as the *Bread* in this Sacrament is called *Christ's Body*, to the same intent as the *Paschal Lamb* was wont to be called, as we are told, the

*Body*

## Vol. II. *On the Lord's Supper.*

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*Body of the Passover*, which was Federally eaten ; and *the Cup* is called the *New Testament* [or *Covenant*] and we bid to *Drink of it*, which is an Application of it to our selves, and a known Ceremony of confirming Leagues. *Which its being*, also, *a Feast upon a Sacrifice*, necessarily infers ; *Sacrificing* being one way of Covenanting with God ; and *Feasting* upon it the way of sharing and partaking therein. And *which*, Finally, *its being the appointed Means of conveying all the Blessings of the Covenant to us* undeniable proves ; because otherwise than by Federal Promises and Performances, these are not to be had. For our *Saviour* tells us of the *Bread* we eat, and of the *Wine* we drink, that they are his *Body* and *Blood* ; though not in *Nature*, yet the least we can hereby understand is, that they are so in *Effect* ; forasmuch as they are intended to convey to us, all those Blessings which the *Piercing of his Body*, and *shedding of his Blood*, procured for us, contained in the *New Covenant* ; such as the *Forgiveness of Sin* ; the *Assistances* of God's Holy Spirit, and a Right to *Life Eternal*. Whose *Blood* is, therefore, said to be *shed for the Remission of Sins* ; whereof the *Cup* in this *Sacrament* is the *Sign* and *Pledge*. He that *eateth Christ's Flesh*, and *drinketh his Blood*, is said to *dwell in Christ*, and *Christ in him* : And *who-so eateth his Flesh*, and *drinketh his Blood* to have *Eternal Life*. Which being *Federal Blessings*, are only to be had by *Federal Performances* ; and which being the *Effects* of the due sense of the *Lord's Supper*, manifesteth it also to be a *Federal Action*. Wherein therefore, as we are to *Remember Christ*, so we do renew our Engagements to him ; repeating the *Vow* made in *Baptism* ; professing *Sorrow* for its often Violations ; giving new  
Security

Psal. 50.  
5.  
1 Cor. 10.  
18.

Matt. 26.  
28.

Joh. 6. 56.  
— \* 54.



Security and Strength to our Obligations ; and in the most solemn manner addicting our selves to a more constant Love, and Service of the Lord *Jesus*, against all our Spiritual Enemies whatsoever. Whereby *Future Sins* become more exceeding Sinful, *Duty* more necessary, and *Rewards* and *Helps* more ascertain'd, as we are hereby more closely united and engaged unto God.

And, in this respect, the *Lord's Supper* necessarily supplies the Deficiency of our *Baptism* ; which, though it devote us to God at first, yet is no means to reconcile us to him, upon our having offended afterwards ; because it is but once administered, and cannot be repeated ; and therefore is the Institution of this other *Sacrament*, in order to the same great Purpose, intended to guard and maintain the *Covenant* between God and Man, whereby *Baptismal* Engagements may be kept in force, and we continue to be *Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants unto our Lives end*.

Between  
one ano-  
ther.

2. We are, also intended by the use of this *Sacrament*, to ratifie a *League of Love and Friendship* with all *Fellow Communicants*, as *Christian Brethren*, hereby knit not only to our Head and common Lord by *Faith*, but endeared to one another by *Love*. Eating and Drinking together at the same *Table*, and partaking of the same *Feast*, hath always been esteem'd a *Note of Friendship*, and is the common way of the World to profess *Kindness*, to compose *Differences*, and to beget *Endearments* among Men. For which end also, the *Pascal Supper* among the *Jews* was celebrated, not only among the Members of the same *Family*, but by that whole *Nation*. Assembled from all *Parts* at the same *Time*, into one *Place*, as one *Body*, feeding on a whole *Lamb*,

*Lamb*, assigned to every Family, *not a Bone* whereof was to be *Broken* or divided, with *Bread* not sowed by any *Leaven*, the better to represent and inforce the *Unity* and *Mildness* that ought to be among them; and which being the *Type* and *Fore-runner* of this our *Christian Feast*; now that *Christ* our *Passover*, is *sacrificed* for us, the *Apostle* exhorts us to *keep the Feast* . . . . *not with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness, but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth.* And <sup>1 Cor. 5. 7, 8.</sup> the rather; because *Our's* is in remembrance of the highest *Excess of Love*, shewed to us by our *Lord's laying down his Life* for our Sakes, obliging us never to forget to return Love again to him by his appointed *Proxies*, which are our *Brethren* And, therefore, we are all herein, *made partakers of one Bread*, sharing in the same Food, as *Servants of the same Lord*, and *Communicating in the same Privileges.* To testify which, was at first annexed *The Holy Kiss*, and the *Ἀγάπαι*, or Feasts of Love mention'd in the *New Testament*: And the result whereof was ever such Expressions of hearty Affection towards one another, as became the Talk of *Heathens*, and the Badge of *Christians*. <sup>1 Cor. 10. 17.</sup>

So that when we come to the *Lord's Supper*, to Remember herein our Saviour *Christ*, and to Confirm the *New Covenant* with Almighty God, we enter also into a *League of Love* with all our *Brethren*, and Promise an inviolable Friendship with them too.

This then, being the *Nature*, and these the *Ends* of this *Holy Sacrament*, as they ought highly to recommend its *Use*; so do they necessarily oblige our *Care* to use it rightly. Which is not design'd only to feast the *Body*, but to employ the *Soul* in the utmost Intention of the *Mind*, and strongest

1 Cor. II.  
29.

strongest Affections of the Heart. Whence arise various and important *Duties* for us to Learn and Practise, in order to apprehend its Benefit, to improve by its Virtue, and (as the *Apostle's* Expression is) to *discern the Lord's Body* therein. For which that God would Dispose us, and assist and succeed us in it, pray we,

Collect on  
Easterday.

‘ Almighty God, who through thine only be-  
‘ gotten Son Jesus Christ, hath overcome  
‘ Death, and opened unto us the Gate of  
‘ Everlasting Life; We humbly beseech  
‘ thee, that as by thy special Grace prevent-  
‘ ing us, thou dost put into our Minds good  
‘ Desires; so by thy continual Help we may  
‘ bring the same to good Effect, through  
‘ Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and  
‘ reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost,  
‘ ever one God, World without end. *Amen.*

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## S E R M O N L . .

O N

The worthy Receiving of the  
Lord's Supper.

1 Cor. xi. 29.

*He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth  
and drinketh Damnation to himself, not dis-  
cerning the Lord's Body.*

**H**AVING in our last Discourse con-  
sider'd the *Nature and End* of the *Sacra-  
ment* of the *Lord's Supper*, in this shall  
be recommended and urg'd its right  
*Use*: A due understanding of its *Meaning*, being  
only in order to manage our Address thereto in a  
becoming *Manner*; which is necessary to avoid  
both the *Guilt* and *Punishment* mention'd in the  
*Text*, intimating it to be *Damnation* to any that  
shall *eat and drink unworthily, not discerning the Lord's  
Body*, in his *Use* of this Sacred Institution.

*The Right  
Use of the  
Lord's  
Supper.*

In speaking therefore, to this Point, I shall fully  
explain what is required of them, who come to the  
*Lord's Supper*, by directing to the *Manner* or  
*Means* of worthily Communicating; and shew-  
ing, as I go along, the necessity of the due Ob-  
servance



servance hereof, for the escaping the *Damnation* threatned.

And here it will be requisite, that every Man use the same Care, at least, in his approaches to the *Lord's Table*, as he is wont; out of good Manners, to do upon an Invitation to feast among his Neighbours; even to *Dress* himself before he goes out, to *Behave* himself civilly and handsomely abroad; and endeavour some handsome return of *Gratitude* for the Kindness received. Whence will arise many Duties incumbent upon us in respect to the *Lord's Supper*, some *Antecedent*, some *Concomitant*; and some *Consequent* to the use thereof: A diligent *Preparation* before; a seasonable *Meditation* in the time of Receiving; an a suitable *Reformation* in the Course of our Life afterwards. All which conspire to make a *Worthy Communicant*; and none of them can wilfully be neglected, without rendring us unworthy Guests at this Holy Feast. Therefore to *Eat and Drink Worthily*, so as to *discern the Lord's Body*, in this Sacred Rite, there must be,

*Preparation for it.*

I. *A Preparation for it*, by the Exercise of several Duties properly *Antecedent* thereto. The *Necessity* and *Nature* whereof it is not difficult to apprehend.

*Its Necessity.*

I. *The Necessity of Preparing before any*, Ordinarily, presume to approach to the Celebration of this *Holy Mystery*, is evident from the Consideration, either of the *Person* inviting us to be his Guests; who is neither our *Inferiour* nor *Equal*, but of the very highest Dignity, the *King of Kings*, and *Lords of Lord's*, of infinite *Majesty Power* and *Purity*, not to be approach'd in any unseemly manner, rudely or precipitately, without *Preparation*.

ration some way suitable to his Grandure. Especially, considering also the Persons *invited* by him; who are ordinarily unready for such an Entertainment; our *best Attire* being but *Rags* and not fit, *Isa. 64. 6.* till mended, to adorn us for such a Solemnity; and our *Ordinary Habit*, being too coarse and too much soil'd to serve for a *Wedding Garment*, without *Matt. 22. 11.* which no Man's appearance will meet with welcome there, and which is not to be had without some previous Expences. Besides, that the *Feast invited to* is of great Preparation and Cost it self; not consisting of Common Food; not designed for ordinary Ends; nor temper'd to an ordinary Palate, or vitiated Stomach. *Prefigured* it was by the *Jewish Passover*, which was never Solemniz'd but with great *Preparations* and timely Notice; and Celebrated it now is, not till a whole Week after a most serious and solemn Form of Invitation hath been published. All which Considerations cannot infer less, than that he who cometh *unprepared*, cometh *unworthily* to the *Lord's Supper*; with great *Disrespect* to the Person who so generously *Invites*; with shameful *Neglect* to himself, who is the Person *Invited*; and in provoking *Contempt* of the good things he is invited to *Feast upon*.

2. *The Nature of Preparation requisite hereto*, may *Is Nature* be considered, either as *Habitual* or *Actual*. *ture.*

1. *Habitual Preparation* is a constant Uniform *Habitual* Course of an Holy Life; *without which*, as a Man *al.* will defile every Divine Service he meddles with, and be in perpetual Danger of God's Wrath and Displeasure, (being in a State of *Impenitency*, and Breach of the *Baptismal Covenant*; which promises not for *some* or *any* particular Times, but *all the Days of a Man's Life*; ) so *with it* a Man can never be *unprepared* for an acceptable performance

mance of the most Holy Duty; (being in that *State of Salvation*, to which the Gospel Grace of *Forgiveness*, and Acceptance is annexed.) And he that is thus *Prepared* may receive *Worthily* the *Lord's Supper* at any time when Opportunity is offered, though he had no particular Foresight of that Opportunity. For however, advantageous other *Preparation* may be, yet not being wilfully neglected, it is better, and our Duty to come so *Prepared* as we can, rather than not at all. For, the Design and End of all *Preparation* is the general care and endeavour of a good Life. And he that is well resolv'd upon, and engaged in this, is *Prepared* though he had no time to make such further *Preparation* as he desired? as neither the *Primitive Christians*, who received the *Sacrament* so frequently could have; nor *Ministers* whose Office obligeth them to Communicate with sick Persons at any Time, are always required to have. And yet there is also,

*Actual.*

2. An *Actual Preparation*, peculiar to this Ordinance; and ordinatily incumbent upon all Communicants, though of never so blameless and holy a Course of Life; forasmuch, as it is the *Highest Act of Christian Worship*; a Complication of the most *Spiritual Performances*; designed and improvable to the most *Beneficial Ends*; deserving more than an ordinary Pitch of Devotion; of but seldom Use; for which the most constantly Pious, cannot be always in the fittest Frame; nor the General Course of the most Holy Life be safe long together, to trust to. The Examination and Renewal whereof can never be put in Practice more seasonably, and with greater advantage than when we are meditating of the *Sacrament*; and the more particularly, and with greater Solemnity this is done, the better; which

ever

every good Man will desire and endeavour to do as well as he can; and, therefore, besides his *Habitual*, he will apply himself, upon such an occasion, to an *Actual Preparation*; wherein, whoever will do what is *Best* and *Possible*, he may govern himself in his Discharge of this Duty, by the following Directions.

Let him set aside some part of every Day in the Week preceeding a *Communion*, with Respect thereto. Allotting one whole Day therein for this Purpose: Retiring from all worldly Business or Diversions, from all Company, and as much as may be from vain and common *Thoughts*; resolving to spend it as an Holy Fast, in Prayer, in Meditation, in Examination (calling our own Ways to Remembrance, by considering the Nature, the Number, the Desert and Aggravation of our past Sins) in humble *Confession*, frankly acknowledging, sincerely bewailing, and fervently Supplicating Mercy for them. In Renewing our most solemn *Resolutions* of new Obedience; renouncing Sin out of Dislike and Hatred, engaging to a more strict and vertuous Life, out of pure Choice and firm Love thereto; in Studying and Recollecting the *Meaning and Benefits* contain'd in the *Mysterious Performance* we are call'd to; in pondering upon, and inuring our selves to those *Acts of Devotion* expected, as proper from us therein; Calling in the appointed Aid (if there be occasion) of some discreet or learned Minister of God's Word... to receive the Benefit of Absolution, together with Ghostly Counsel and Advice, to the quieting of Conscience, and the avoiding of all Scruple and Doubtfulness, particularly putting on at this Time, Bowels of Mercies, Kindness and Charity, being disposed to give our Alms, to intercede with our Prayers, and to forgive

Psal. 119.  
59.

First Exhortation  
before the  
Office of  
Communion.

Col. 3. 12.



give by a sincere and speedy *Reconciliation*. And after all, Closing, as we were directed to begin, the Day, with *humble Prayer to God*, to accept and bless such our Endeavours for *Preparation*, and to prepare us better himself, by sending his *Holy Spirit* to adorn our Souls with such *Graces*, as may invite and secure the *Divine Presence* to abide and dwell in us for ever.

Such are the *Performances* that are proper and seasonable *Means* to actuate *vertuous Habits*, capacitating for a right Use of the Holy *Mystery*, according to the import of what our *Catechism* teaches us, is *required of them who come to the Lord's Supper*, that they *Examine themselves*, whether they *repent them truly of their former Sins*: *Stedfastly purposing to lead a new Life*; *have a lively Faith in God's Mercy through Christ*, with a *thankful Remembrance of his Death*; and be in *Charity with all Men*. Wherein, were all more sedulous and sincere to do more or less, as *Occasion and Opportunity* offered; as they would greatly vindicate the *Sacredness* of the Ordinance, so would they be sure to reap more of its *Sweetness* and *Profit* themselves: The general Complaint of the *little Good* that is got by it, proceeding from nothing more than the *little Preparation* that is usually made for it.

And though, it is not to be said, That he eats and drinks unworthily, not discerning the *Lord's Body*, who doth not actually perform every one of these things, every time before he *Communicates*; yet it may reasonably be presumed, that he, who hath *Leisure and Will* to do so, will be likely to *Communicate more Worthily*, and be able to *Discern*, and *Feel* more of the *Spiritual Efficacy* [of the *Lord's Body*, influencing and cherishing the *Inward Man* therein; and that, therefore

fore all are obliged to *Prepare* themselves what they can ; and cannot do too much herein ; and ought to do somewhat extraordinary as upon an extraordinary *Occasion*, and for extraordinary *Ends* ; there being further required in a *Worthy Communicant*, as was observed, besides a *Diligent Preparation*,

II. *A seasonable Meditation* in the time of Re-*Meditation*ceiving the *Lord's Supper* ; obliging to several Du-*on it.*ties *Concomitant* to the Ordinance ; for the sake only whereof *Preparation* is necessary ; and without which the Benefit of it will be turn'd to disadvantage as aggravating the Sin of so sudden a Relapse. Therefore, 'tis not our being never so *Well-dress'd*, that can privilege our *Rudeness* ; which exposeth the *Want of Manners* more to Notice and Contempt, unless we be also well *Behaved*, agreeable to the several parts of the whole Office we are to be engaged in.

For which End, it may be convenient and well becoming Christian Piety, notwithstanding our most solemn *Preparation*, to welcome the Day that brings our *Saviour* so near unto us, with more particular Acts of *Joy and Thanksgiving* for our Preservation to so blessed an Opportunity ; renewing those *Thoughts and Affections* so lately excited, and assisting our present *Devotions*, not only by attention on the most excellent Office adapted to the *Communion of Service*, but by being provided with some useful *Manual* (such more particularly, is that generally approved on, writ by the Reverend Dr. Lake, called *Officium Eucharisticum*, or *A Preparatory Service to a Devout and Worthy Reception of the Lord's Supper*) that will direct and carry on Contemplation in the most pious and familiar *Forms of Devotion* proper to the several parts of this Holy Rite ; greatly

serving to keep the Heart fixt, the Affections warm and vigorous, and the Thoughts constantly employed, through the whole Action; filling the Chasms, and improving the Worship of the publick Office, by various Acts, pertinent and proper for the various Seasons, distinguish'd in this Religious Service.

Before its  
Celebrati-  
on.

1 Cor. 11.  
28.

1. *Introducing the Holy Ceremony before its Celebration, in a Review and Repetition of Self-Examination, Which is the first thing we are call'd upon to do, in that serious and seasonable Exhortation appointed to be read at the time of Administring this Sacrament; which however duely done before, is not impertinently now urged again, considering, either the Dignity of the Ordinance, or the Danger of unworthy Receiving, or the Advice of St. Paul, who enjoyns, Let a Man examine himself, and so let him Eat, &c. seeming to direct this to be an immediate Duty before Receiving: It being seasonable to Act over again, Sorrow for, and Resolution against Sin; whereof Men can never be too oft, or unseasonably put in Mind, even, again and again, To try and examine themselves. To Judge themselves, that they be not judged of the Lord, To Repent truly for past Sins; To have a lively and stedfast Faith in Christ our Saviour; To amend their Lives, and be in perfect Charity with all Men; that they may come now with a clear Conscience, and unburthen'd Soul encourag'd, and already upon the Wing to offer Thanksgivings to God; which is the next Act our Devotion is exhorted to, as a principal Duty at this Eucharistical Feast; which is a Commemoration of the exceeding great Love of our Master, and only Saviour Jesus Christ, dying for us, and the innumerable Benefits which by his precious Blood-*

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*Blood-shedding he hath obtained for us.* And therefore, *above all things*, it is now seasonable, that we give humble and hearty Thanks to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the Redemption of the World, by the Death and Passion of our Saviour Christ. Which yet so necessarily bringing also our Sins to remembrance, which were the procuring Cause of all our Lord's Sufferings, it obligeth us to Humble Confession, Meekly made, now, upon our Knees; the more sensibly to declare how little we deserve the Mercy, how much we need it, and how highly we are obliged for it. And then with Faith and Consolation, may Absolution and the Divine Promises be attended to, and received from the Minister of God pronouncing them in his Name, for the removal of all Fears and mis-giving Thoughts, that are apt to clogg and sink down penitent Souls; which are now call'd to Elevation, to lift up the Heart unto the Lord, in a more than ordinary flight of Devotion, being raptur'd with Love and Wonder; and regarding nothing but the highs of the present Mystery; Soaring above the reach of Sublunary Diversions, winging themselves into Heaven, being deposited in the hands of God, there to be kept while the Solemnity lasts. And then may the Angel's Song be sung with advantage, to the Glory of God in the Highest, with a Fervency and Pleasure almost unison to the Angels and Arch-angels, with all the Company of Heaven, lauding and magnifying his glorious Name.

2. And, because the nearer our approaches are to God in this Mystery, it will become us to express the greater Reverence, therefore doth our Church, excellently and seasonably, in her Office proceed, with the most indulgent Care and Kind-

*Before its  
Consecra-  
tion.*



ness, to direct next our Devotions, even in our Entrance upon the very Action, and *before Consecration*; Premising an *Address*, whereby we may seasonably *Apologize* for our unworthy Approach to so Sacred a Mystery; which cannot be worthily Communicated in, but with profoundest Humility; not trusting in our own imperfect Righteousness, but in God's manifold and great Mercies, &c. In a Sense whereof, and of our own pressing Needs, hereby also we express our earnest Desires to taste of this Heavenly Banquet; in a Worthy and Effectual manner, to be nourish'd and better'd by it, and to be Consecrated our selves by the consecrated Symbols, which otherwise instead of Food may prove Poyson to us; Grant us, therefore, Gracious Lord, so to Eat the Flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to Drink his Blood, that our sinful Bodies may be made clean by his Body, and our Souls washed through his most precious Blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us. To feed and strengthen which fit Desires, the Prayer of Consecration succeeding begins their Entertainment, by engaging our Devotion to set forth the admirable Love and Bounty of the Giver [Who of his tender Mercy did give his only Son Jesus Christ to suffer Death upon the Cross for our Redemption.] To magnifie the incomparable worth of the Gift of a Dying Saviour on the Cross, [Who made there, by his own Oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World:] To confess the Divine Original of this its Commemoration, that the Son of God [did institute, and in his Holy Gospel command us to continue a perpetual memory of that his precious Death, until his coming again.] And then to Petition the

the Divine Blessing thereupon, [that we receiving these Creatures of Bread and Wine, according to Christ's Holy Institution, in remembrance of his Death and Passion, may be Partakers of his most Blessed Body and Blood.

3. In the time of Consecration, our Devotion is directed by the very words thereof, mentioning the time of Institution to be in the same Night in which our Lord was Betrayed, exciting Love towards Christ himself, from this fresh instance of his kindness to the last, (whose love thus appears to be stronger than Death towards us, and commanding Respect and Reverence towards this his Institution, endeared to us, as the last and greatest Testimony of our Dying Friend. The Manner wherefore, also, mentioned in relation to the Elements, both of Bread and Wine, in their Preparation, Distribution and Direction how to use them, suggests variety of Pious Thoughts whereto it will be seasonable and profitable to attend; the least Circumstance being not without its Mystery, and is improveable towards our discerning of the Lord's Body in this Holy Rite. The simplicity of the Elements our Lord hath chosen to be remembered by, represents him our Exemplar of Humility; to whose Dignity though some curious and costly Preparation had been more agreeable, yet nothing better could express his Condescension. His Taking, Blessing and Fitting these for Distribution, representing the freeness of his Love, and Sacredness of the Action; cannot but invigorate our Gratitude and Seriousness also at this time. His imparting them to his Disciples; as it endears the present coming from such an Hand, so it assures them of their Relation to his Family; and at once obliges not

In the  
time of  
Consecra-  
tion.

only to Honour the Donor, but both to Hunger and Thirst after the Gift, and to value truly their own Dignity conferred by such an offer. His directing these Elements to be received from himself as his own Body and Blood in Remembrance of him; as it is to assure us that the work of Expiation is already finished, so is it to exercise the strength of Faith eyeing the invisible realities veiled under these visible Elements to raise Expectation and Hope of the Blessings intended us hereby, to fill the Heart with Joy and Gladness, and to revive and confirm vigorous Resolutions of more care to save our own Souls, which have been bought at the expence of so great Sufferings of our Lord.

Before its  
Admini.  
stration.

4. And even yet, further, immediately before Administration, though the time may be short, yet some interval there is while the Minister is receiving himself, and delivering to others, wherein variety of proper and peculiar Contemplations may sanctifie the Season, and contribute somewhat towards the worthiness of our Receiving. By considering now afresh the approaching opportunity of greatly bettering or worsening our selves, according to our own behaviour and disposedness for it. Ejaculating some good wishes suitable to the present need we have of the Divine Assistance; that God would remember and strengthen us only this once. Remembring our sins we are to Renounce and Sacrifice here at our Saviour's Cross to keep us now Humble and Lowly in our own Eyes, that we may be more acceptable in the Eyes of God, who though he be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly, but the Proud he knoweth afar off. Reviewing our wants both to spread them now before the Lord, and to invigorate our Desires after his Grace and

Mercy.

Judg. 16.  
28.

Psal. 138.  
6.

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Mercy. Readily assisting our Brethren with the Charity of our *Prayers* while they are receiving; wishing Life to every one of their Souls hereby; and that all we who are here met together at this Blessed Feast, may also meet in everlasting Glory. And welcoming the approach of our share in this Feast to our selves, as overjoyed at the Visit of our Lord, and labouring to express the same Reverence both in Body and Soul, as we would do were he visibly present with a train of glorious Angels to acknowledge and seal us for his own.

And for assistance in such seasonable Acts of Devotion, now may be a proper time to make use of our *Manual*, the more regularly and calmly to compose our Souls to Feast with God in Deep Silence and Heavenly Contemplation,

5. *In the very time of Receiving*, we may receive seasonable Direction from the *Words of Administration* (which fitly paraphrase our Saviour's words of Institution, and are therefore profitably repeated to every Communicant) how to raise and exercise Devotion in Acts of Faith apprehending every thing beyond, though nothing contrary to our present Sense in the Ceremony. Of Humility contemplating our own Unworthiness of the offered Favours; of Love and Resignation of our selves to God in return for Christ's being given for us. Of longing Desire to Eat the Heavenly Food and Live for ever. Of Holy Wonder and Ecstasies of Admiration at the Condescending Kindness, reached out freely, which we needed infinitely, and wished for impatiently. Of Penitential Sorrow, for God's Wrath and our Lord's Sufferings caused by our Sins, whose Body was given and Blood shed for us, and we charged with the Murther



Murther of the most righteous and innocent Person that ever lived. Of *Trust* and *Dependence* upon the Merit and Benefit of Christ's *Passion*, in full assurance hereby of his having taken upon him our Sins, and communicating to us his Righteousness. Of *Confirmed Resolutions* to make good the *Vows* we are now renewing, to live to him who died for us, and for the Merit and Graces Sealed to us, Devote our selves in the *Blood of the Everlasting Covenant* to be entirely his, to take him with his Cross, and to serve him with all our Strength and Enjoyments, *having Sworn*, and being *stedfastly purposed to keep his Righteous Judgment*. And, finally, Of *Hearty Thanksgiving*; to which the form of *Administration* expressly exhorteth, containing matter most deserving thereof, from which the Mind cannot worthily be taken off till first Thanks be paid for the same. *Blessed, therefore, be the Lord God of Israel from Everlasting to Everlasting; and Blessed be his Glorious Name for ever, and let the whole Earth be filled with his Glory! Amen, and Amen.*

Psal. 119.  
106.

In these and such like Contemplations may a well disposed Mind employ its self in the time of its Feasting on this Heavenly Banquet. And because there is a further space before this Publick Service proceeds; therefore may our *Devotions* be further directed and assisted.

In the  
time of  
others Re-  
ceiving.

6. In the time while the rest of the Congregation are *Communicating*, in Meditating on the *Ineffable Felicity of Heaven*, the *Eternal Supper of the Lamb*, and our more intimate and perfect Union with God and Christ above. Whereof this *Feast* is a little *Emblem*, *Antepast*, and *Pledge* to every worthy Communicant. Once more *Examining* our own State. Lamenting our own unworthiness and

Indisposi-

Indispositions. Surveying the Difficulties and Dangers of that Pious Course now undertaken. And calling upon the *Father of Mercies* for Grace and Courage, for Strength and Protection suitable and sufficient for our Relief. Exercising our *Charity* most affectionately towards all: Not despising the meanest, to whom we see *Christ* so readily distributing himself; *Loving* all as Friends and Favourites to the same Prince; being resolved to do any kindness to another who have just received so great kindness our selves. Considering the Necessities of all *Mankind*, the Calamities of the *Church*, the Miseries of the *Sick*, the Wants of the *Poor*, the Condition of *Relations*, *Friends*, and *Acquaintance*, yea, the Enmity of our *Enemies*; designing Good to all from the Good done to our selves; and not leaving the *Mount* before we deposite our best wishes for others. And particularly Praying for those who are yet to Communicate in *one or both kinds*; aiding them with our Suffrage, and sealing to them the *Blessings* conveyed in the *Symbols* they receive by joyning with them our hearty *Amen*. And then,

7. When the Administration is over, and before we depart from the Lord's Table, the Publick Service beginning again, our Private Devotion must here be respite, and attendance given only thereto. Which reasonably will engage us in Acts of Supplication to God for his *Mercy*, and Acceptance of this our Sacrifice of Praise and Thanks-giving, that we may find the happy Effects of our Lord's Passion. Of Oblation of our Selves, our Souls and Bodies to be a Reasonable, Holy and Lively Sacrifice unto him; who hath Purchased and Delivered us by his Blood; given himself a Testimony of the Divine Favour and Pledge

After the  
Admini-  
stration,

Pledge of his *Love* to us in this Sacrament, and to whom we have sworn Fealty, and confirm'd our Allegiance therein. Of *Earnest Desire* both for Ability to make good this our Obligation, and for Acceptance of our unworthy yet sincere Endeavours. Of *Praise and Thanksgiving* in a most seasonable *Doxology* to the *Blessed Trinity*, Singing the *Angel's Song*, having just been Feasted with *Angel's Food*, in our Churches most Seraphical Descant thereupon. Of *Faith* in receiving the concluding *Benediction*, as not only begging but imparting Heavenly Blessings to the duly qualified; wherewith we are dismissed and may return home with Joy, with the *Blessing of God along with us*, that will never leave us so long as the *Peace of God* doth Rule in our Hearts. Leaving behind us on the Altar the *Oblation of our Alms*, which though at all times commendable, is never more seasonable and necessary than now, to expresse and maintain that Union to Christ and one another newly renewed and confirmed, as some return for our great Engagements to God, and the Charity which he hath been exercising towards us. By this small Token giving God the Livery and Seisin (as it were) of our selves and all we have; and a Testimony of how much more we owe unto him. With respect whereto our *Saviour* directs us to approach his Altar, not without our *Gifts*. And the *Apostle* hath joyned the Sacrifice of *Alms* to that of the *Eucharist*, enjoyning us to do good when we Communicate, and no more to forget the one than the other. And for which end our Church hath provided select Portions of *Scripture* to be read in her Office of Communion, as not being compleat without an *Offerory*.

Mat. 5.

23.

Heb. 13.

16.

Suc

Such are the *Concomitant Duties* rendering a Reception of the *Lord's Supper* worthy. Which though impracticable by all alike, in the same measure and to the same pitch of Devotion: Yet ought all to attend as much as may be hereto; and especially to those Parts hereof which suit best their Temper, and are most apt to move their Affections; and the greater our endeavours and desires are herein, the more acceptable and successful will our *Communicating* be when Devotion cannot be too fervent; and without aiming at the highest, will be in danger to fall to the lowest pitch thereof, most unbecoming the House of God in any Service, and much more in this, wherein we draw nearest to the Divine Presence in the Assembly of his most Holy Saints, upon the most important Errand, and of greatest Consequence to our future well or ill Being for ever. So that none can be too careful, as of his Preparation, so of Meditation in order to a worthy receiving this Holy Sacrament. Which also requires, as was said,

Pr. 93. 5.

III. Lastly, A suitable Reformation, in a due practice of the *Subsequent Duties* through the whole course of Life afterwards. For therefore we receive, not for the sake of a Devout Hour, but an Holy Life. And though a Man may come conveniently Prepared, and may in good measure be Holily Conversant in the Ordinance, yet if he be careless and look not to himself after the Duty is done, he may unravel all he hath done and render it in vain and noxious: Forasmuch as a Relapse adds danger to all Indispositions. And therefore it is advisable that after every Communion, there might immediately succeed for some time,

Reformation after it.



By Retirement.

1. *A Retirement into private.* It arguing a Soul but little Affected that can presently rellish Worldly Converse, after an Entertainment of Heavenly Sweetness; and exposing to greater danger, to step out of the heat of *Devotion* into the frigid Embraces of *Temporal Matters*. Too sudden a Relaxation, not only *unbends* but *breaks* the Thought, which remitted by degrees, is more apt to be reduced. And therefore a *Sequestration* of our selves now is both *Seasonable* and *Safe*. Wherein our first Employment may be,

Examination.

2. *An after-Examination* (as before of our *Qualification* for, so now) of our *Success* and *Improvement* by our *Performance*; in order to *Humble* our selves in *Acts of Repentance* for our *Failings*, or to *Magnifie* the Mercy and Power of *Divine Grace* in *Acts of Praise* and *Thanksgiving* to God for any our *Spiritual Attainments*, Endeavouring by this *After-Act*, in the *former Case*, to do that which we should have done before; wherein if we be sincere and hearty, though we have missed of the *Comforts*, yet may we derive some of the *Nourishment* of the Feast (even this effect thereof being, though not what we would have had therefrom, yet what was well worth the going for thereto.) And in the *latter case* to indulge our selves in *Enjoyment* of him *whom our Soul loveth*, and hath received, and to labour to *Charm* him (as it were) to stay with us by all the *Delight* and *Joy* we can contribute by the *Melody* of our *Praises* and *Thanksgivings* to him. And then, also, hereto it will be profitable to add,

Renewal of our Covenant.

3. *An after-renewal of the Covenant*, just before ratified with God, in that we are but now returned from doing. Because the *Oath* of

of the Lord being now upon us, we cannot do too much to strengthen our Obligation thereby, which is not to be violated but upon the most aggravated *Guilt* and *Danger*. Therefore to evidence the Sincerity and Constancy of our Resolutions, and Care to *keep* as well as *make* our Vows unto God, we again profess our Consent to what we have been a-doing; and readiness to do it again; to secure our Fidelity and Perseverance; that *having escaped the Pollutions of this World through 2Pet. 2. the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we 20.* may never again be intangled therein and overcome, lest our latter end prove worse with us than our Beginning. And then, also, contrive to exhibit,

4. *Some present Specimen of the good Effect of such Immediate Resolutions.* Reducing good Dispositions into Act, <sup>ate Exc-</sup> while the *Will* is bent, and *Affections* warm; which <sup>cution</sup> is a setting out with *Wind* and *Tide*, without *Toyl* <sup>thereof.</sup> or *Disappointment*, immediately wreaking Revenge upon some beloved *Lust* vowed against or engaging in some instance of *Obedience* promised to be performed; vigilantly laying hold on the very *first Opportunities*, for which we are best prepared, to engage in with most advantage after a *Communion*; and which neglected greatly prejudices; because by the success of these *first Attempts*, we shall both give Experiment of the *Grace* received, and have somewhat wherewith to upbraid future *Remissness*. Particularly,

5. *A Living, henceforward, in perfect Charity with* <sup>Living in</sup> *our Brethren*, is what we are in a special manner engaged to, and have been making a most solemn Profession of by this *Sacrament*. And they who after it offer to take up their Enmities and Differences again, did insincerely lay them down, and did but mock God, when they addressed him here-  
in

in with a pretence of Love; their Hearts not being thoroughly resolved to forget and forgive all injuries and offences. And the greater *Difficulty* and *Danger* we apprehend in our strict Observance of this or any other Christian Duty, the more Necessity after every *Communion*, is thereof.

And in  
Desire of  
the next  
Communion.

6. Lastly, *A diligent Maintaining in our Souls a constant Longing after another such Repast.* Whereby our *Spiritual Strength* may be renewed, the *Flame of our Devotion* kept always burning; our *Lusts* brought under a perpetual restraint; our *Preparations* be rendred more easie; and our *Readiness* more certain. That how frequent soever the returns of such Opportunities are, we may never be tempted to neglect or omit any, having always an *Appetite* for all of them. And that if it should please God to call us hence before another offers, yet being found *Prepared*, we may be *Perfected*, and dwell with *Christ*, he being found dwelling in us, and be admitted to sit down with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven*, among the *Blessed that are called unto the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb.*

Mat. 8.  
11.  
Rev. 19.  
9.

*For which Blessed State, God Almighty thus fit us; and by his Grace, in due time, bring us all from a Worthy Receiving to an eternal Enjoying of our Lord! To whom be Glory for Ever. Amen.*

SER-

## SERMON LI.

THE

Necessity of Receiving the  
LORD's-SUPPER.

1 Cor. xi. 24.

—*This do in Remembrance of me.*

**A**MONG the many Complaints made by the more Considerate and Sober Christians against the *Neglect of Duty*; we find none more *Common*, nor indeed more *Iust* than those made against the Neglect of what is so expressly enjoyn'd in the *Text*, the Constant Receiving of the *Lord's-Supper*. A peculiar and unaccountable Obstinacy generally prevailing against this Ordinance. Inasmuch that many continuing in a fair *Communion* with the *Church*, in all other respects and parts of the established *Publick Worship*, do seldom or never frequent this, towards which they are estranged with the *Indifferency* or *Averseness* becoming the most *Arbitrary*, or *Unreasonable* Practice; as if there was nothing of *Duty* or *Advantage* in the Ordinance; but that every Man was left to his own *Freedom*, and it were the *Wiseſt Choice* not to meddle therewith.

O o

To



The Ne-  
cessity of  
the Lord's  
Supper.

To Correct this Error, and to endeavour to re-  
duce Men's Minds to a better temper, I intend  
now to display the *Necessity* of Mens Receiving this  
Sacrament, imply'd in these Words of our Lord,  
quoted by St. Paul in the *Text*; which being so  
very Expressive of the Obligatoriness of the Com-  
mand, infer or imply Arguments peculiarly Per-  
suasive to an Observance, and Dissuasive from a  
sinful Omission thereof. This being Enacted most  
*Absolutely*. Upon the sole *Authority* of our Savi-  
our. As his *last and dying* Injunction. For which  
he hath express'd a very *Particular Concern*. Where-  
in he hath shew'd himself very *Tender* of, and  
*Gracious* towards us. A Non-observance whereof  
greatly aggravates *Guilt*, and justly exposes to  
the utmost *Punishment*. All which things being  
duly explain'd, cannot amount to less than a  
Demonstration of the *Necessity* of constantly Re-  
ceiving the *Lord's-Supper*, and of the *Unreasona-  
bleness* of Omitting it. For,

This Com-  
mand for  
it being  
*Absolute*.

I. *This Command to do it is Absolute*, without Li-  
mitation or Exception; whereby *All* are obliged,  
and Liberty or Choice left to *None* to refuse it. And  
as our *Saviour* did not say, *Ye may do this* if you  
please, so neither did he mean that the *Apostles*  
to whom he gave this *Command*, should alone be  
obliged by it; they being the Representatives of  
the whole *Church*, and St. Paul here repeating and  
applying it to the *Corinthians* also; with whom  
all *Christians* in all succeeding Ages are compre-  
hended. All therefore that are of the *Church* of  
*Christ*, who profess themselves his *Disciples*, who  
desire and hope for Salvation by his *Sufferings* and  
*Death*, are here spoke to, and *Positively* obliged  
to *Do this*; which therefore ought to lie as close  
upon every Man's *Conscience*, as any other Com-  
mand

mand of the *Gospel* whatsoever. None being more *Absolutely* expressed, nor thereby more intimated to be *Necessary* to be kept. He that Supinely and wilfully ventures to thwart the Divine Will in this Instance, may as reasonably oppose it in any other ; having as much Liberty to be a *Drunkard* or *Whoremonger*, or *Murderer*, as an obstinate *Non-Communicant* ; and as much reason to expect to be saved in any of *Those*, as in *This Sin* ; all bearing the Guilt of *Disobedience* to a Divine Command, and only differing in some *Degree*, or *Kind*, and it may be, having no more *Hainous Aggravations*, and liable to the same *Condemnation*. For God is angry at one Sin as well as another ; and his Will is no less violated by *not doing a Command*, than by *doing what is Forbidden* ; neither is there any Sin more positively and absolutely forbid, than this Duty is commanded ; the Breach therefore whereof ought to be as much shun'd and dreaded, because, also,

II. *This Command is grounded purely on the Authority of Christ* ; which implies a double Obligation by Christ. very peculiarly obliging our Obedience to it.

1. *Because it is Enacted upon the Authority of Christ.* Who hath merited our best and utmost Services ; having *Done* and *Suffered* infinitely more for our *Sakes* and *Interest*, than what he requires from us, or we can *Do* and *Suffer* for him. Whom to requite and oblige, common *Gratitude* and *Ingenuity* should suffer us to stick at nothing ; since every thing we have or hope for, is owing to his *Bounty*, and purchased at his *Cost* for us. If such a Friend, upon so hard Terms cannot gain upon our Compliance with his Will ; what will move Wretches so ingrateful ? or whom shall we not deny, Denying herein the Lord that bought us ?

2 Pet. 3. *us* ? So endeared and enforced is this *Command*, by the *Authority* it is Enacted upon ; whereby we are *Necessitated* to a constant Receiving of the *Lord's-Supper*, upon this account peculiar to it, inhancing the Obligatoriness of the Duty, And that too,

*Only upon his Authority.* 2. *Because it is Enacted only upon Christ's Authority.* Having nothing else to recommend or urge its Observance. Wherein Conscience is no way, upon any other account concerned. Which therefore, is a Duty peculiar to *Christians*, and the only sure Test of their Sincerity and Love to their *Saviour*. For as for the Duties of *Temperance*, *Justice*, *Gratitude*, *Humility*, *Charity*, *Prayer* to God and the like ; though our *Saviour* also enjoyn'd these, yet is he not *Alone* herein, these being Duties of a long time taught before he came, to the *Jews* by *Moses* and the *Prophets*, and to the *Gentile* World by the *Light of Nature*, and *Dictate of Conscience* ; whereby he had an open and ready way made for his re-establishing, and inculcating such Precepts with utmost Improvements ; their Reception being made easie by Men's own Dispositions. But in this Command of the *Lord's-Supper* *Christ* evidently stands alone Whereof *Natural Reason* knows nothing, and to which no Man's *Conscience* will oblige him, but that of a *Christian*. And this seems to be the Chief, if not the only Reason, why the *Sin* of its *Omission*, is so generally committed (as we see it is) with less *Horrour* and *Regret* than any other the most *Notorious Villanies* whatsoever. For it is not because there is less of *Sin*, but because there is no *Light of Nature* to discover the Obligation of *Duty* therein ; neither is there any Motive to it but the Sense of our *Allegiance* and *Love* to the Authority of *Christ*.  
Com

Compliance is also due to it purely for his Sake ; and which is the strongest Bond upon all that *Love the Lord Jesus* to observe it, and the most favourable opportunity of approving Obedience to him. Nor indeed is there any other Instance thereof, whereby Sincerity can be so infallibly and acceptably testified ; so that the *Neglect* or *Omission* of this Duty cannot imply less than *Disregard* to the *Person*, and *Disloyalty* to the *Authority* of Christ, whose *Command* it is ; and for whose Sake we are bound to observe it, Especially, since further,

III. *This was the last and Dying Command of Christ.* *His last and Dying Command.*  
 Deliver'd by him but the very Night before he Suffered, and in the same Night (as it is expressly noted before the *Text*) in which he was betrayed, when he had the certain Prospect of Death in his Eyes: In a Season, when Men are generally wont to be most *Sincere* and *Serious* in uttering most weighty and needful Advice ; which commands both Attention and Credit ; and is usually receiv'd and reverenc'd, as the most Sacred Relicks, to be religiously laid up and regarded for ever after. Nothing being esteemed more Barbarous than to slight or refuse to *Do*, unless it be something very Difficult and Unreasonable, what a dying *Man*, much more a dying *Friend* hath *Desired* ; yea, (having *Authority* also) hath *Positively Commanded*. So that the very timing of this *Command* is a peculiar Recommendation of the *Institution*, and a powerful Motive to its Observance : And of all dying *Men*, our *Saviour* will seem to have express'd his Good-Will to the least good Purpose and Effect, to those who set at naught and will not be concluded by this his *Last Will* concerning them ; so ill requiting his *Dying Love*, as not to obey his *Dying Command*.



Wherein  
he was  
more than  
Ordinarily  
concerned.

IV. For this also, Christ hath seemed to express a very Particular Concern; repeating his Mind, and signifying his Desire of Establishing it even after his Glorification; and delivering a Charge concerning it, not only from amidst his Agonies on Earth, but from amidst his Triumphs in Heaven. Neither the extremity of Sorrows, nor the height of Joys diverting or abating his Care for his Church herein; who, (however slight some are pleased to account of this Sacred Rite,) deemed its Command so very material, that when our Apostle received his Commission immediately from him, when he was miraculously called to preach the Gospel, it was by Name, in the most punctual and solemn manner inserted and specified, so as no other particular part of his Office seems to have been. *I have* (saith St. Paul before the Text) *received of the Lord* [even by an extraordinary Revelation] *that which I also delivered unto you* [as from him] namely, *That the Lord Jesus the same Night in which he was betrayed, took Bread, &c. . . And said . . . This do in Remembrance of me*: Hereby intimating the Institution to be an Essential part of Christianity, which is neither truly propagated, nor established where this is not duly Practised; and which, therefore above all other Instructions, deserves an extraordinary Recommendation, and must necessarily require a very singular Regard, if the same Mind be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus, whose Esteem and Concern ought to command our Opinion and Practice in Deference and Conformity to himself herein.

Phil. 2.5.

Favourable in his Demand.

V. Herein further Christ hath shewed himself very Tender and Gracious towards us. To Do this is very Easie and Honourable: To Do it in Remembrance of Christ,

*Christ*, by way of *Commemoration*, is *Religious*, and by Way of *Covenanting*, is very *Beneficial*.

1. *To Do this is a very easie Command of Christ.* It is neither *Troublesome* nor *Costly*, *Tedious* nor *Labourious*. It is nothing to the numerous expensive *Being ea-* Ceremonies and Institutions of the *Jewish Worship sy.* put an end to hereby, *which neither they, nor their Fathers were able to bear*; it is nothing to the Bar- *Acts 15.* barities many *Heathens* submit to in their *Idola-<sup>10.</sup>* trous Worship of the *Devil*. It is nothing to what we owe, and *Christ*, might justly have required from us in return for what he hath done and suffered for Us. Yea, it is nothing of more *Hardship*, than we could reasonably desire to have chosen our selves; less than which, they that would *Do* any thing, could not contrive to *Do*, to such important Ends, and so advantageous Purposes. And therefore not to *Do* this in Obedience to *Christ*, is the height of Disobedience, in contempt of *Christian Liberty*, and of that Love which purchas'd it at so dear a Rate for us. This moreover,

2. *Is Honourable to us.* It invites us as *Christ's Honoura-* own Guests to his Table, and there treats us as *ble.* his Friends and Confidants with Heavenly Food and Welcome. Which is a *Dignity* not to have been expected, or aspired after by Man, without God's own Contrivance and offer thereof to him; and which to refuse, being the Favour of one infinitely above us, is not Humility but Pride in such his Inferiours. Neither can it become Man, thirsting after Honour from the World, to despise it being profered from Heaven; or when God condescends, to grow haughty and regardless. However,

Religious.

3. *To do this is Religious.* It is a Sacrifice of Prayer and Thanksgiving to God, and to our Saviour in Commemoration of the Love and Mercy of our Redemption. We Praise God hereby for his great and unexpressible Goodness, in sending his Son into the world to be an Expiation for our Sins, and Plead before him the Vertue and Merit hereof for our Pardon and Acceptance. By it we ascribe to *Christ* the Honour thereof with Joy and Thankfulness to his Memory, in Testimony of our Faith and Hope, and Trust in him, as our Lord and Saviour, being neither asham'd of his Cross, nor afraid of any Sufferings for his Sake. By it we express in visible Signs, what we think our selves bound to do in Words and Actions, even all the parts of the publick *Christian Worship*, which would be very lame and imperfect without it. And therefore, the Institution of our Saviour does not confine a *Christians Doing this* to any fix'd and settled Times, because it is what may be expected from them in all their publick Religious Assemblies, whenever they meet together to worship God and their Saviour. And so the *Apostles*, and *Primitive Christians* are observed to have Practis'd; which nothing but the Degeneracy of the Age, the decay of Christian Piety, and that little Sense Men have of the Necessity and Advantages of this Duty hath broke off and doth still obstruct. And therefore in *Doing this* we are by *Christ* only required and directed to *Christian Worship*; whereby our *Prayers* and *Praises*, and the other parts of our *Publick Worship* may be rendred efficacious and acceptable, through the Recommendation of that *Expiatory Sacrifice*, applied by this Institution of our Saviour's under the Gospel, as the Offering of *Sacrifices* was under the Law:

To

To whose Direction for Divine Worship, it becomes and behoves us to submit, since he best knows what will please God, and is due to himself herein. Especially seeing, also, that

4. *This is Beneficial*, by way of *Covenanting* *Beneficial.* with God hereby, in order to partake in the Benefits and Blessings, which *Christ* hath purchased by his Death, in his own appointed Way, Sacramentally conveyed in these Symbols and Signs of his Body and Blood. So that we are obliged to the Observance hereof out of pure Conscience and Safety to our Souls; as necessary to support that Spiritual Life begun in *Baptism*, and to repair the decays of Grace, that we may grow and Increase in Holiness, *more and more until we come unto the Everlasting Kingdom.* For to this End not only the the more remote and accidental Advantages of *Preparation* are themselves very considerable Improvements for the security of our spiritual State, for as much as they oblige us to *Recollection*, Fix indefinite Purposes to *consider our Ways*, (that might otherwise be endlessly deferred) and hereby check our Career in Sin; but also the intrinsic *Benefits* of the *Celebration* of the *Ordinance* it self, are much more Efficacious Helps against all Assaults of Spiritual Enemies from without, and the Remedy of all the Maladies of the Soul within: *Our Souls being [strengthened and refreshed by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine.]* New Vigour is instill'd into our weak and languishing Souls, by the immortal Food duly received in the Holy Eucharist. All the Habits of *Faith* are increased and excercised hereby, and a solemn Profession thereof made herein, not only binds it more strongly on the Soul, but engageth the  
Divine



Divine Blessing to help *Unbelief*. This Ordinance excites and urges *Repentance*, from the malignity of Sin represented in our Lord's Sufferings, and by the freest Mercy for Sinners remembered in his Attonement. It applies and confirms the *Remission of Sins*; whereof this *Sacrament* is a Sign and Pledge; and obliges moreover to a very particular Forgiveness of all our Enemies, which is the very Condition upon which our own Forgiveness depends. It ties our *Union with Christ* faster and closer. It distributes Sacramental Pledges of his Love. It admits us not only to eat at his Table, but to feed on his Body in that Spiritual manner they are exhibited to us in this *Sacrament* of his own Institution. It excites the Grace of *Charity* and *Love*, both towards God; and towards one another; by all the Engagements of Love herein remembered, and set before us. It advances and enlivens *Hope*, by the Sealing and Assuring the *Covenant* of Mercy and Forgiveness hereby to us. It Heightens a Christian's *Joy* and *Comfort* in the transporting Embraces of our Dearest Lord, and in the Exercise of raised and refined Devotion, which is *the Peace of God that passeth all Understanding*. It Administers to every well-disposed Soul, the *Pledge and Foretaste of our future Glory*, which is the Blessing of the breaking of Christ's *Body*, and shedding of his *Blood* procured for, and applied to us. In a word; this Feast is to us whatever we need, *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*; possessing us of him who is so; and with whom God freely giveth all things. So that this, Christ hath commanded us to *Do*, is no barren or unprofitable Ceremony; but as necessary to the Life and Health

1 Cor. 1.  
30.  
Rom. 8.  
32.

Health of the Soul, as Bread is to that of the Body. And did Men love their Souls as they do their Bodies, they would no more neglect the *Supper of the Lord*, than their *daily Food*.

Thus *tender and Gracious towards us*, hath our Lord shewn himself in Commanding us so *Easie*, so *Honourable*, so *Religious* and *Beneficial* a Duty; expressing his Authority wholly in Love, and serving himself of us only in doing us good. In-  
somuch that to disobey him, is Injury to our selves; and the refusal of so much Good an in-  
fliction of the more Evil. Whence the *Guilt of Neglecting* is not less manifest than the *Duty of Receiving*, to convince us yet further, of the *Necessity* of the *Lord's Supper*. And therefore, we add concerning this Command; That,

VI. *By the Non-Observance thereof Guilt appears to be extremely aggravated*; even beyond what ordinarily attends the breach of other Divine Precepts; whereof though none may be neglected with less *Regret*, yet are none violated with more *Guilt*; There being peculiar Aggravations rendring this such a Complicated, monstrous and uncommon Sin, that as this Consideration will justify the Infliction of the utmost Vengeance threatned against any Sin, so ought it to dissuade and deter effectually from this of neglecting to *Do this in remembrance of Christ*. For the least that can be said hereof is, That hereby the *Authority*, and *Love*, and *Wisdom* of our Lord is unworthily contemn'd; that our *Profession*, our *Baptism*, our *Faith*, and *Divine Assistance* denied; an *Offence* and *Discouragement* to good Men scandalously given; an Inlett to *Divisions*, to *Ignorance* and *Immorality* certainly laid open; and an occasion created of insupportable *Grief* and

*Guilt ag-  
gravated  
by a Non-  
observ-  
ance.*

and Trouble to our selves when we shall come to Die. All which things as they mightily strengthen the force of this *Command*, so will they more convincingly discover the aggravated *Guilt* of its Neglect to dissuade from it. Because thereby,

*Christ's Authority being contemned.*

1. *Christ's Authority is most unworthily contemned* whom professing to be our *Prince and Saviour*; we treat as some *Tyrant or Usurper*, with such Indignity and Rebellion as no other *Lawgiver* is wont to meet with. And while *Heathens* reverence their *Gods*, which yet are no *Gods*; whilst *Mahometans* punctually observe the *Laws* of their *Mahomet*; and the *Jews* the *Ordinances* of *Moses*, in many things, even to this Day; *Christians* only, to the reproach of their Religion, have so little regard to their *Christ*, as to disobey him in this very *Command*, that hath a special Relation to the Benefit pretended to be had by him. They submit to his Will no further, than it accords with their own. They turn their backs at their pleasure upon what he *Institutes*. They account not themselves to be obliged to *Do* all he requires: Which, what is this, but openly to declare, That, *they will not have this Man to Reign over them*. Such Vile Affront to the *Authority*, and Legislative Power of *Christ*, doth a Customary neglect to receive the *Lord's-Supper* plainly imply. Whereby, further,

Luk. 19.  
14.  
*His kindness slighted.*

2. *His Love and Kindness is no less ingratefully slighted*. Whom we shun to approach, whilst he affects and seeks *Union* with us, in *Mysteries* created on purpose, descending even to our *Sensuality*, and because we want *Spiritual Appetites*, putting himself within reach of our *Natural*. Neither will we stir out of our own method,

thod, and flexible rejecting self, turn his Love would be Iniquities healed. Unnatural among usually to them; Instance both thers.

3. *Christ's Neglect* an imp or wort vation, it. Th set up a Instit Wherei much m Persons Syrian for his surely a Name of the Place Pharpap waters clean?

4. *N* sion of a

thod, and way to meet him, but remain Inflexible to his, so wonderful a Condescension, rejecting his Contrivance to engage us to himself, turning our backs upon the *Memorials* of his Love, and refusing to Commemorate as he would have us, those very *Stripes*, which our Iniquities made, and by which alone we can be healed. This surely is an hardness of Heart, and Unnaturalness of Affection, never heard of among *Publicans* and *Sinners*, the worst Men not usually refusing to *Do good to those, who do good to them*; yet it is too Notoriously common in this Instance, among *Christians*, and renders them both the most Impious and Inhuman of Sinners. And, the more so, because hereby also,

Isa. 53.5.

Luk. 6. 33.

3. *Christ's Wisdom is Audaciously reproached.* A *His Wisdom Neglect* implies a *Dislike* of his Ordinance; as an impertinent and needless Ceremony; not fit or worthy to be made a means of Grace and Salvation, presumed to be better obtained without it. This Ordinance, were some Men allotted to set up a Religion in the World, should never be Instituted by them, as it was by their *Saviour*. Wherein is all the *Pride* and *Rashness*, though much more *Presumption* (upon the account of the Persons concern'd) than was express'd by the *Syrian Leper* towards the *Prophet's* Prescription for his Cure, Behold, saith he, *I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the Name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the Place and recover the Leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar Rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?*

2 Kings 5. 11, 12

4. *Neither is this neglect agreeable to the Profession of a Christian; who refuses to Do what can alone*

Profession Refused.



alone distinguish him from *Jews* and *Pagans*. For none of the other Acts of Religious Worship are so peculiarly the *Badge* of *Christianity*, or so directly and immediately intend a *Memorial* of *Jesus Christ*, as this of the *Lord's-Supper*. And, therefore, for Men to say they are *Christians*, because they frequent *Christian Assemblies*, and joyn in all the other parts of *Publick Worship*, is not sufficient; because this is done by *Infidels* upon occasion, and what *Education*, or *Custom*, or *Curiosity* will induce to; and are rather cold Intimations of a Man's *Opinion*, than of his *Faith*. And though a Man may be also an *Hypocrite* that *Communicates*; yet nevertheless he becomes thereby an outward *Professor*, and appears a *Disciple* of *Christ*. Whereas the *Non-Communicant* appears quite otherwise, however sincere and zealous he may be in his other Acts of Religious Profession, because he doth not *Confess Christ* herein *before Men* in the most significant way, but denies him by not complying with it. Infomuch that the best that can be said of such, is, That they profess Religion, but not Christianity; and that if then they are *Christians*, they are so without the Proper Profession of it; and, for such Denial, and with-holding thereof, they hazard *Christ's Denial* of them before his Father which is in Heaven.

Mat. 10.  
32, 33.

Baptism  
renounced.

5. Neither further, is it only the *Outward Profession* that is hereby suppressed, but it is even the *Baptismal Covenant* that is implicitly Renounced. Which being made without our *Knowledge* and *Consent* when *Infants*, and since so frequently violated, doth oblige us to take it upon our selves. And for such a *Renewal* of it this *Ordinance* is appointed, when we arrive

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to Years and is it, but sing to Se or denying thereby, a free as we Pleasure? ments of Renew the This, we Declare, we would we do to as lies in of Infidel be less st over,

6. A n The Com with one principal Intercour spiritual and most by, both fusal wh Faith, an a Fundar

Communica tion of Sa and to denies hin but also,

7. An This Sac lick Christi

to Tears and Capacity. But to neglect this, what is it, but a withdrawing our Consent, or refusing to Seal what was promised in our Name; or denying our selves to be under any Promise thereby, and that we are resolved to continue as free as we can, to be at our own Dispose and Pleasure? For if we *Own* or *Like* the Engagements of *Baptism*, Why do we not *Confirm* and *Renew* them? Because, while we *Refuse* or *Delay* *This*, we *Renounce*, and make void *That*; and Declare, that had it been in our *Power* or *Choice*, we would never have consented to one more than we do to the other. So that hereby, as much as lies in our Power, we are reduced to the State of Infidels and Heathens. And then it will be less strange if we add, That hereby moreover,

6. *A main Article of our Creed is denied, viz. An Article of the*  
*The Communion of Saints, even with Christ, and*  
*with one another. Whereof this Sacrament is a*  
*principal Instrument; intended as an especial*  
*Intercourse between Christ and his Church, in the*  
*spiritual Communication of his own Body and Blood,*  
*and most affectionate Union of his Members there-*  
*by, both to himself and to one another. A re-*  
*usal whereof, is both a denial of the Christian*  
*Faith, and Excommunication from the Benefit of*  
*a Fundamental Church-Privilege. And for a Non-*  
*Communicant to profess he believeth the Commu-*  
*nion of Saints, is to publish his own Hypocrisie; Tit. I. 16.*  
*and to Profess that he knows God, but in Works*  
*denies him. Nor only is Faith hereby denied,*  
*but also,*

7. *An instituted Means of Grace is neglected. A means*  
*This Sacrament being an essential part of Pub- of Grace*  
*lick Christian Worship, and an appointed Convey- neglected.*  
*ance*

ance of the Blessings of the *New Covenant*; and without which, where an extraordinary Providence doth not interpose, the certain Application thereof is not to be depended on. For as God is not ordinarily wont to work *without Means*, so it belongeth not to us to confine him to the *Means* he shall work by. And though *all the Means* of Grace tend to one and the same end, of Sanctification and Salvation, yet they operate several ways towards it, each according to its own Nature; and where therefore God hath commanded us to use *Means more than one*, there the use of *all but one* is neither a sufficient discharge of Duty, nor right qualification for that Grace which is promised to a sincere use of *all*. So that he that neglects to do this, whatever else he does, he falls short of Duty, and is chargeable with the neglect of his own Salvation; and of having done despite unto the Spirit of Grace. Which, as it is fatal

Heb. 2. 3.

10. 29.

Good men  
Scandalized.

to the Guilty Person; so,  
8. It is an Offence and Discouragement scandalously given to the innocent and best Men. Not only Ministers grieving to see the untractableness of their People, and successlesness of their Endeavours: But many Unweary Souls suffering by the Number and Authority of such Misleading Examples prevailing upon them; and the Zeal of Believers is apt to be dampt to see so few of their Mind, and the solemnity of the Ordinance so much check'd and defac'd. And this, then, lays open,

The Church  
ruined.

9. An Inlet to Divisions, Ignorance and Immorality to the Churches ruine, and the overthrow of Christ's Kingdom in this World. This Table was anciently accounted a Sacred Tye and Contestation of Christians-Communion; which while all

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duly frequented, *Union and Peace* made the *Church* flourish; and the Flock never scattered till this Fold was forsook, and liberty taken to divide into Parties, as the great Enemy of this *Sacrament* and of Mens *Salvation*, pleased to seduce them. And then the necessary *Preparations* for Communicating being disused, and the benefit of *Spiritual Assistances* thereby wanted, Mens Minds soon grow dark and senseless, and Truth and Duty are neither apprehended nor searched after; and one of the strongest restraints from *Impiety* is thrown off; a way made to Sin without either shame or excuse; and hereby a devastation brought upon the *Church*, which no endeavours have hitherto been able to stop or prevail against. So that whereas *Unworthy Communicants Eat and Drink their own Damnation*, the more *Unworthy Non-Communicants* occasion, what in them lies, the Damnation of all, and Damn even *Religion* it self. And this, therefore, is,

10. Lastly, *What is likely to create insupportable Death Grief and Trouble at the Hour of Death.* When the *Imbitte-* want of this *Sacrament* is wont to be perceived, *red.* and hath ever been accounted a most seasonable *Viaticum* or Provision wherewith Souls might depart in peace; and without which they usually live but to make themselves more affraid to Die. It having been truly observed that for the most part Persons are found to be *Comforted* or *Dejected* on their *Sick-Beds*, according to their *Communicating* or *Non-Communicating* in the time of their *Healths*; insomuch that 'tis difficult to determine which is is most rare in visiting the Sick, to find a *Communicant* troubled in Mind, or a *Non-Communicant* (whom God hath given any sence of his State) that is not.



All these Aggravations as they discover the heinousness of the Sin violating so peculiar a Command, so will they vindicate the justness of that Vengeance threatned against it. Which is the last Argument to be urged, even,

*Damnation incurred by its Neglect.*

VII. *The everlasting Damnation it exposes to.* Which is the Wages of all Sin, and includes the utmost Punishment of any Sin, and is the peculiar Danger of breaking this Commandment. For it is Damnation if it be abused or complied with Unworthily; He that Eateth and Drinketh Unworthily, Eateth and Drinketh Damnation to himself (as it followeth the Text.) And it is no less so if it be Disused or Neglected unreasonably. For except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and Drink his Blood ye have no Life in you (saith our Saviour.) Which Words, though spoke before the Institution of this Sacrament (as was likewise that Discourse of Baptism to Nicodemus, before Baptism was appointed for a standing Rite in the Church) yet did the Ancient Church generally understand them of Eating Christ's Flesh in this Sacrament. And whether they, and other later Expositors of their Mind, are right or wrong in their interpretation, yet their Opinion is certainly Orthodox; since this danger of Everlasting Death and Damnation is no other than what the Sin deserves in its Nature, and tendeth to in its Consequences, and what is expressly threatned to the Neglect of Baptism, (which is the other Sacrament of equal Rank with this;) And what was the appointed Punishment for the Neglect of the Jewish Passover, which was but a Shadow or Temporary Type answering hereto, being the same under the Lam, as this Feast of the

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*Lord's Supper* is to us under the *Gospel*, when *Christ* as our *Passover* is now also sacrificed for<sup>1 Cor. 5.</sup> us. So that the *Danger* of Sinfully omitting<sup>7.</sup> this Duty, is apparently no less *Damnation*, than of any other Duty; and the *Necessity* of obeying this *Command* the very same as *Eternal Life* is to us.

And if all these ties of Conscience be now rightly put together, then surely it will appear, that if God Almighty hath required any thing at Mens Hands, that may be called *Religion*, in order to *Salvation*, This Duty must come under the same *Necessity* and *Obligation*; and from this nothing can dispense, but what Divine Providence may permit to be an insuperable Bar against all possibility of *doing* this. So that none of those *sorry Shifts* and *designed Pretences*, so ordinarily made use of, and desperately trusted to, can possibly acquit us, unless assurance could be had that either our *Saviour* did not intend what is here *commanded*; or that God hath provided for the Innocency of *Omission* by as positive a proof of Scripture as he hath here declared for the necessity of *Performance* of this Duty.

The due consideration hereof will naturally tend to beget and nourish a just Esteem and Veneration for the constant and frequent use of this Holy *Sacrament*: And caution us to be as apprehensive and shy of violating this *Command* enjoying it, as any other Duty prescribed in the *Gospel*. And the rather, because its neglect is become so customary, and Examples are every where so numerous and prevalent to seduce. So that, however scandalous and sinful it is in it self, yet there is no Sin persisted in with less

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reproach and more quiet; nor apologized for more unreasonably, and conniv'd at with less concern to the dishonour of *Christ*, and visible decay of *Christianity* among us.

*Almighty God, therefore, by his Effectual Grace so vindicate the Necessity of his own Ordinance and seasonably reduce all to their Duty in Respect thereto: that by the constancy and worthiness of our Doing this in remembrance of his Dear Son here on Earth, we may be remembered by him, for good, now he is in his Kingdom in Heaven: To whom be Glory now and for ever. Amen.*

SER.

Vol. I.

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## S E R M O N LII.

## O N T H E

## Excuses for Non-Communicating.

Luke xiv. 18.

*And they all with one consent began to make  
Excuse,——*

**H**AVING in the foregoing Discourse urged the *Necessity* of the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's-Supper*; I shall to succeed and compleat what hath been therein offered, add some further Endeavours more to remove the most usual Plea alledged to excuse and hinder the due observation thereof.

For which end these words afford just occasion, being part of a Parable made use of by our *Saviour*, whereby to convince the *Jews* of their gross neglect of the gracious tenders of Mercy and Blessedness that had been made unto them. *A certain Man*, saith he *made a great Supper, and bad many, And sent his Servant at Supper time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make Excuse.* They not only re-



fused the *Invitation*, but sought to justify their *Refusal*; nor was there only here and there *One* of the *Guests* that did so, but *all with one consent*: Implying it to be a general Sin to slight and reject the Grace of God, and to persist in the Fault upon a company of *Excuses* fair and specious in shew, though in *reality* vain and frivolous. In-  
 somuch that if to *Excuse* were to *Justify*, *Offenders* would be as rare as *Offences* are common, there being no Sin thought so good that all will be willing to own who are guilty thereof, and none so bad but most know how to make *Excuses* for. *Excuses* (as one says) being a Cover that will fit all *Sins*; so that as there is no Sin necessitated to be without it, so there is none more extravagantly indulged therewith than the Sin of *Non-Communicating* in the *Lord's-Supper*. Of the Odiousness whereof Men are so sensibly apprehensive, that they durst not so customarily turn their backs upon so acknowledged a Duty and Sacred Ordinance, had they not always in a readiness some formal pretence, wherewith they endeavour to stop for the present the mouth of Conscience. Therefore do we see while some very few good Christians do duly and constantly present themselves before the Lord at his Table, out of a Sense of Duty; Multitudes of others, some of whom would be thought no less Good, if not much better, do totally absent themselves, or neglect to appear there so oft as they might, as they also pretend out of Duty too. They will not call it a Sin to absent from the Holy Feast, because themselves refuse the Invitation to it; and to endeavour therefore to make it something else, they usually daub and palliate this their fault with pretences drawn from Arguments of all  
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sorts, serving to every occasion relating thereto; some being intended to excuse a *Total*, and others only apologizing for an *Occasional*, however frequent, *neglect* hereof.

Of the *former sort*, some respect more immediately *themselves*, who are the *Guests* invited; objecting a sense of their own *Unworthiness* to come; the necessary *Temptations* of their particular *Callings* to indispose them, and *inability to answer the design of coming*, by a life suitable to their renewed *Obligations* afterwards. Some further, respect more strictly the *Ordinance*; which is the *Feast* invited to; alledging its *Sacredness*, its *Difficulty*, its *Danger*, its *Unprofitableness*, and *Male-Administration*. And others also, cast the *Blame* upon *Others*, that are the *Company* they are invited with; complaining that *Most*, and some of the *Best* refuse to come with them; and of those that do come, there are too *Many* whom they care not to joyn with therein.

*Excuses  
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Supper.*

Of the *Latter sort*, are all those *Occasional Hindrances* insisted on to serve only a present turn; which, not preserving from immediate *Guilt*, are no less requisite to be consider'd; and some of which however trivial, yet being objected, will deserve to be answer'd. The most usual we meet with insist one while on the *Want of Charity*, either in themselves towards others, or in others towards them: Another while, on some *Family Indispositions*, whether by *Sickness* in themselves, or some other; a late *Feast*, an unseasonable *Visit*, or *Disappointment* of the *Company* intended to joyn with them: And, too often, even the *Unseasonableness of the Weather* is made an *Excuse* for the *Omission* of such an *Opportunity*.

For there is hardly any *Non-Communicant* but will find something to say ; and there is hardly any thing that is commonly said by them, but may be reduced to some of these Arguments here mention'd ; whereby the Sin of their Omission is endeavoured to be excused. If there should happen to be any Objection not here taken notice of; 'tis likely to be somewhat less material ; that may find its Answer, either here, or may deserve none ; and he that will not take then his Answer to his Objection, will remain, as to all human Endeavours, irreclaimable, and as to all human Appearance, nigh unto a Reprobate State ; so that having forsaken God, he is deserted by him ; and being prejudic'd to Duty, nothing shall ever be said to convince him of his Sin. Which is, indeed, the most rational Account that can be given of the continued use still made of any Excuse, after so frequent and apparent Refutations of all that have ever yet been made against this Holy Ordinance. For,

*The total Neglect thereof.*

I. *As for those intended to Excuse for a Total Neglect of the Sacrament ; as they are Unlawfully urged, so are they Weakly grounded.* For the Neglect of a known Duty is inexcusable. There may be an Excuse for an *Interruption*, but there can be none for a *Neglect*, to do what God hath positively ordered to be done. And therefore, this if well weighed and applied, would serve for Answer to all the *Excuses* of this kind. However, to abate of their Fondness for them, it will be requisite also to Display the Weakness of the Arguments Men depend upon to be excused by, from whatever Head they are taken. And therefore, consider we,

*With respect to the Guests who are.*

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their own *Unworthiness* to come; the unavoidable Temptations of their particular *Callings*, necessitating their Indisposition thereto, and their mistrust of *Ability* to answer the Design of their coming, in a Life suitable to their renewed Obligations afterwards. None of which will appear to be sufficient, were it allowable to make any Excuse for a Total Omission of so absolute a Duty. For,

1. *A Sense of Man's own Unworthiness to come, Unworthy.* when invited to this Holy Feast, is no reason at all to excuse their not coming. Because it favours of *Pride* and *Folly*, to think we must be *Worthy* of the Divine Favours, which must all be acknowledged to be above Man's desert, even to the least common Mercy we enjoyn. Not our *Merit*, but only our *Fitness* is Required to receive them; whereof a penitent and humble Sense of our selves is a principal Disposition, without which no Man can approach to this Ordinance, in any Sense *Worthily*. For this is a *Feast* prepared not for *Angels* and glorified *Saints*, but only for humble and penitent *Sinners*. And such, by the *Grace* of God, and their own sincere *Endeavours*, may the most *Unworthy* become; these being in every Man's Power to make use of; and of the other this *Sacrament* is an instituted means; (that excellent Degree of Goodness, which Men would have to fit them for it, being not to be had but by the use of it.) The *Neglect* whereof renders more *Unworthy*; and a sincere Man will scruple no less the Sin of *Omitting a Duty*, than the hazard of *Performing it amiss*. His equal Fears on both sides will make him diligent in seeking Satisfaction, and in endeavouring such a Reformation, as that he may offend neither one way nor the other. For it is not our *Sense*, but our *Guilt* of being

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*Unworthy*, that is the only Indisposition for receiving the Sacrament. And if it be *Guilt* that makes us fear to come *Unworthily* thereto, then why should not the fear of *Guilt* make us afraid to absent *Sinfully* therefrom? And if we fear *Guilt*, why do we not use the means to be rid on't, by a speedy breaking off our Sin of *Neglect*, and by a ready Compliance with our Duty of *Receiving*. For so long as we persist to Neglect a *known Duty*, we certainly continue to live in a *known Sin*. And so long, we are unfit and unworthy to serve God in *Any Duty*; and from a Sense of *Unworthiness*, have as much reason to refrain our *Prayers*, as being *Abominations*, and for the same reason that we yet think our selves obliged to *Pray*, ought we also to *Communicate*; and must resolve it to be better to do our Duty, if not as well as we would, yet as well as we can, rather than not do it at all. For no Man that doth his Duty as well as he can, needs to fear his doing amiss; but he that, for fear of doing it amiss, neglects it, he necessarily offends; and is as unfit to *Die* as he is to *Communicate*, and no more excusable hereby from one than the other. For there is a positive Law to do both; and though only *one* can be omitted, yet *neither* is excusable from a sense of unfitness. For we must *Die* whether we be fit or no; And we must *Receive* and fit our selves for it in obedience to the same Divine Will. And as no Man goes about to excuse his *Dying* for fear of his unpreparedness for it, so ought none to excuse his *Non-Communicating* by an Argument that will not alter his Circumstances in *Dying*; and which indeed, were it admitted, would never permit a Man to be prepared for either. For might he be excused *Dying*, as he excuseth himself

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from *Communicating*, by his fears about his *Fitness* for it ; as he would never think himself fit, so would he never consent to do it ; but think himself the more excusable, the longer he defers, having more reason to fear, as he would have more guilt to account for. So that to plead *Unworthiness* for *Neglect*, that ought only to be repented of and amended, in order to our speedy and constant *Performance* of Duty, is a plain declaration of an intention never to do it all. Because it is (where once admitted) an excuse that will never be answered ; and will improve by use. Inasmuch that it is a Common Observation that those who insisted hereupon Ten or Twenty Years ago, do so still, and may as well do it as long as they live, thereby to excuse for their never *Receiving*, being still unsatisfied about their *Worthiness* for the *Lord's-Supper*, as they ever will have more reason to be, the longer they absent themselves from it. In like manner,

2. *The unavoidable Temptations of any particular Calling* (pretended to necessitate an indisposition to this Ordinance) cannot be a sincere *Excuse* for its neglect. For a Man cannot hope to live in this World in any Calling, or Circumstances of Condition free from *Temptations* ; which the World is full of, and our own false *Hearts* are ready to catch at, and the Devil's Subtilty and Malice disposed to insnare us by. And this therefore is no necessary *Sin*, to indispose for Duty ; because it is what cannot be helped, and which may be designed, in the exercise of our Graces much to our *Advantage*, the rather to dispose us for this Ordinance ; and to urge us from a sense of our continual danger, to a more frequent and zealous use thereof for our Security. And therefore

Exposed  
to Temptations in  
their Calling.

fore the greater *Temptations* we have to encounter, with, the more vigilant will it concern us to be, and constant to our Duty. And no Men in the World have more need of *Spiritual Helps*, than such as are necessitated to converse most in *Spiritual Dangers*: Neither have any so much reason to complain of *These*, as to Repent of and Reform a neglect of *Those*; It not being the *Temptations*; but *Sloth* and *Carelessness* to resist *Temptations*, that renders any Condition or Calling inconsistent with Duty. For, ordinarily, it is our own abuse that creates the *Temptation* of any Calling, and there is no lawful Calling but may be used lawfully, and its *Temptations* be resisted and overcome. And no doubt but there have been sincere and upright *Christians* of every Calling, even amidst the greatest hazard of *Temptations* and hurry of Business, *walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord, blameless.*

Luke 1.6. And, I think, there is no Calling, upon the account whereof, any Man thinks himself obliged to disclaim God and all Profession of Religion. Tho' this may as reasonably be done, because equally indisposed for thereby, as this Ordinance is. No Service is acceptable under the Power of a *Temptation*; and no Employment more necessitates to neglect the *Lord's-Supper*, than to cast off the practice of all other Religious Duties; which rather than become guilty of, it becomes an indispensable Duty to leave such employment, or least to leave out of it all such practices as are sinful; which are not to be persisted in, though we were under no obligation to receive the *Sacrament*; being to prefer *Innocency* to Wordly Gain. So that whatever a Man's *course of Life* is in this World, yet may he be a *Worthy Communicant* if he

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will, notwithstanding the *Temptations* he may struggle with; whereby his *neglect* will be aggravated, but can never be justified. Finally,

3. *A mistrust of Ability to answer the design of Communicating, by a future Life suitable to the Obligations renewed in the Lord's-Supper cannot excuse its neglect.* Because it is unreasonable to fear and mistrust *Ability* to do any thing that God hath made a *Duty*: Who best knoweth what we can do, and hath obliged us to nothing impossible. For it is not a Sinless state of Perfection that God requireth from us, or that we hereby oblige ourselves to: But only a *Penitential State of Sincere Endeavours*, never to offend God wilfully, to watch against *Surprizes*, and if at any time we are ensnared, not to persist in our Fault, nor ever return to an habitual course of Wickedness, but speedily to repent and amend. And by God's help, (which is never denied any that heartily desire and make use of it) this any one may do; and must do, whether ever he renew his Promise thereof in this *Sacrament* or no. For this is what he hath vowed in his *Baptism*, which is of Eternal Obligation to him; And what all his hopes of future welfare depend on, without which he is irrecoverably undone for ever. And this, therefore being of absolute necessity, is no more to be scrupled for fear of any consequent Danger, than the *Eating* of our Meat is to be forborn for fear of its breeding *Diseases*, or the Administration of a proper *Remedy* to be refused, for fear of a *Relapse*. For no Man is necessitated to *Violate* the *Vows* he reneweth in this Ordinance, but he is absolutely necessitated to a frequent Renewal of them herein; and by so doing will be most likely to be able to keep them; whereby they are rendered



rendred more Sacred; and a regard and remembrance thereof will be hereby quickned and confirmed; and a means of God's own appointment, which will be sure to be accompanied with the Divine Blessing, honestly used. And the visible good success of such Communicating ought to convince us that there is no such danger of breaking our Vows then rightly renewed. For how ill Lives soever some few *Communicants* should be observed to lead; this is, indeed a good Reason for caution to us, to make our Sacramental Promises upon true Principles of Piety, (which those 'tis likely never did) but is no reason to make us fear our not making good what we shall rightly promise. Otherwise, this Ordinance would be so far from being what it is designed to be, an *Instrument of Holiness*, that it would prove only a Snare to aggravate Guilt, and which then, the Tempter would be so far from suggesting scruples to hinder Men from, that he would be sure to employ his subtilty to draw them more to it. Whereas, 'tis evident, that where there is one Sinner that perisheth, by returning to a course of Wickedness after such Sacred Vows repeated against it; there are Thousands that perish, that would never be prevailed with to confirm hereby their Vows, ever to amend at all. And finally, supposing it should happen according to these pretended *Fears*, (which yet is very unlikely, and as well secured against as is possible) that a Man should return to his former course of Sin after his Vows renewed at the *Lord's-Supper* against it; yet doth not even this (though greatly aggravating guilt) render such an one's Condition *Desperate*, nor more *Dangerous* than theirs who obstinately refuse to Vow against their Sin here

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hereby at all. For even such a *Relapse* is, through the Merits and Satisfaction of Christ Pardonable upon a renewal of Repentance, for which this Ordinance is both the Means and Opportunity; Whereas a continued neglect of Receiving the *Lord's-Supper*, and wilfully persisting in the Sin of omitting a known Duty is a State of *Impenitence* for which there is no Pardon. And therefore, far more reason is there to fear our Continuing *Non-Communicants*, than to fear our *Inability* to live worthy *Communicants*; which it is so unreasonable, and pernicious to fear, so as not to endeavour it at all.

Thus easily and fully answerable are all the *Scruples*, respecting the *Communicant's* sense of *Unworthiness*, the *Temptations of their Callings*, and *Mistrustfulness of their Ability* to answer the Obligations of this *Fæderal Rite*, wherewith a *Total Neglect* thereof is usually Apologized for. Proceed we to consider next,

2. *Those Respecting more strictly the Ordinance it* <sup>With Re-</sup> *self*, which is the *Feast* invited to, alledging its <sup>spect to the</sup> *Sacredness*, its *Difficulty*, its *Danger*, its *Unprofitableness*, and *Male-Administration*; which however <sup>Feast</sup> *zealously urged*, will yet appear but weak Arguments to justify a *Non-Communicant*. For, <sup>which is</sup>

1. *The Sacredness of the Lord's-Supper* (it being <sup>Sacred.</sup> a Feasting on the *Body and Blood of Christ*, and Eating at the same Table with Almighty God) is what cannot be too much rever'd, and in the sense whereof all ought to be aware of *Presuming* thereupon, and be tenderly cautious of the *Prophanation* thereof: But from the sense of this totally to neglect, or infrequently to comply with its Institution, as is pretended by some, is evidently unreasonable: For by such a Sense Men can only  
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be qualified to *Communicate worthily*, and will be least liable either to presume upon or *Prophane* the Ordinance. Neither is it Humility but Presumption to refuse to do whatever God hath Commanded; that being a Feigned *Reverence* which discards *Obediente*; upon which Pretence the whole *Christian Profession* may as reasonably be slighted; the Sacredness, and Honour and Privilege whereof is no less above us, such as could never have been modestly aspired after, had not the unbounded kindness of Heaven freely offered and invited us to accept it. Which therefore we think our selves obliged to do with all humble Thankfulness, and dare not refuse it out of a Pretence of Modesty and Self-abasement. Nor need it to be feared that *Familiarity* in Spirituals will breed *Contempt*, as it is observed to do in Temporals; since the worth of those ever as much exceeds, as the Satisfaction of these fall short of Fancy and Expectation; and which therefore improves as much in one, as it decays in the other by *Use*. Only *Mis-Usage* and *Dis-Usage* can render *Sacred* things Contemptible; which is all that belongs to us to fear; so that if so be we do our Duty as well and often as we are required, we ought to leave the Vindication of its Honour to God, who will take care of his own *Institutions* himself; our Constancy wherein, is the only Means of begetting and expressing our Veneration thereof; which Neglect reproaches. And therefore the *Primitive Christians*, who knew best how to esteem the *Sacredness* of this Ordinance, and made the most exemplary Profession of Humility, are Generally observed to have been the most constant and frequent herein; being so far from refraining wholly, or complying rarely out of Modesty and Veneration, that they

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they *Communicated* daily ; so that our *Reverence* is of a much differing make from theirs, if it produce such contrary Effects ; and may justly be suspected to be (as one calls it) but the *Devil* in *Samuel's* Mantle, *Sloth* clad in the Habit of Humility.

2. *The Difficulty of Worthily Communicating, is no Difficulty.*  
*Excuse* for any one's Neglect of the *Lord's-Supper*. Because good things are always Difficult, and Diligence and Labour is Man's Duty ; which is never more advantageously expended than in the Service of God ; nor more reasonably required than in this Duty. For herein nothing is imposed that is impossible ; nothing but what is necessary to render us good Men, and acceptable Christians ; which however Difficult at first, yet is never complain'd nor repented of by them that have been inured thereto ; who are desirous to be saved upon any Terms ; and think themselves obliged to obey God, in his more harsh as well as easier Commands : Being assured, that no *Labour* will prove to be *in vain in the Lord* ; that the Service of Sin and Lusts exact much more ; to which only is owing all the Difficulty that we are necessitated to undergo herein ; for which there is always proportionable Assistance profered to help through ; and wherein no more is required, than what we have Ability and Leisure for ; so that *unto whomsoever much is given, of him only shall much be required*, and provided there be no wilful Neglect of due Preparation, God requires and will accept of such as Men can make. So that no Pretence of Difficulty, or want of Time and Ability ought to be urged, or can ever be allowed to put us by our Duty in this Case. And so further,

<sup>1</sup> Cor. 13;  
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Lui. 12. 48.



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1 Cor. II.  
29.

3. *The Hazard and Danger of Communicating Unworthily*, is very impertinently, and impiously urged to discourage Persons from *Communicating* at all. Because, though it is said, That he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself; yet, probably, the Damnation here threatned to the unworthy *Corinthians* was peculiar to them, and those first Ages of the Church; executed in miraculous Strokes of Diseases and Death (the Power whereof is now ceased) as a Judgment for their open *Schisms* and Gross *Intemperances* introduced by their *Love-Feasts*, (the occasion whereof is also now wanting.) Or however, *Damnation* is no where represented to be the certain consequence of *Communicating*, and we may avoid it if we will, and yet come to the *Sacrament*; and there is as much *Danger* in unnecessarily Absenting from it; which only changeth but abateth nothing of Guilt; there being a *Rock*, we may split on, on each Hand of us. Nay, of the two, it is more of *Contempt*, that exposeth to more *Guilt* and *Danger*, to Neglect the *Sacrament*, than to partake of it *Unworthily*; because, he that lives in a continued Neglect of a known Duty, hath no reason to fear being in a worse Condition; and he that continues to do his Duty may thereby better it, by God's Grace if he will. And therefore the only reasonable Inference from the feared *Danger* of *Unworthily Communicating* is, for our Safety to use Care and Endeavours, that we neglect not to *Communicate as Worthily* as we can: otherwise upon the same Pretence, any may justify a renouncing of all Religion; the unworthy Performance of its other Duties, incurring a like *Guilt* and *Danger*. whereby a Man may Damn himself for fear of *Damnation*. Again,

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4. *The Unprofitableness of this Ordinance*, preten-<sup>Unprofitable.</sup> ded to be experienc'd in themselves, or observ'd in others who use it, cannot excuse a sinful Neglect thereof. Because, it being made our *Duty*, it must be persisted in, whether we are better by it or no: wherein we intend chiefly to serve God; and are bound to observe his Will, in whatever he pleases, not only *without*, but *contrary* to our Interest. Hereby, having done our Duty, we cannot be worse, as we necessarily must have been, had we neglected it; and if we do it as we ought we shall be better; since whatever can be hoped to make a Man better, is hereby conveyed both from the Vertue of God's *Promise*, and the Nature of *the Duty*, if not always Presently, or in the Instances and Degrees expected, yet always Effectually, according to our Needs and Capacities, as God sees fittest for us. And therefore, he that is not better hereby, it is only through his own Fault; which also will frustrate the Benefit of all other Ordinances, which being more frequented, may as reasonably be forborn and renounced together with this *Sacrament* upon this Pretence, that will remain no longer than Men are willing it should do. Finally,

5. *The Male-Administration of the Lord's Supper*,<sup>Not rightly Administred.</sup> complain'd of by some in our Church, from sometimes a Dislike of the *Minister* administering, and sometimes an aversion to the *Posture* it is required to be received in, is a no less unreasonable *Apology* for the *Omission* of this Duty, or for *Separation* from our Assemblies.

1. *For the Minister administering.* Be he what he will, yet he is a Divine Officer, and ought not<sup>By a faulty Minister.</sup> to be censur'd or dispis'd lightly. Neither are all alike faulty; so that this *Excuse* will not serve for

all Persons nor at all times : There being plenty, (God be praised !) of such Ministers in our *Church*, as from which the most nice need not fear Pollution. And where it is otherwise, though it is a Deplorable thing, and matter of Humiliation, yet it derives no Detriment to the Ordinance, nor Guilt to the *Worthy Communicant*; the Virtue of that depending on the Promise of God, whose Institution it is, and the Acceptableness of this only on Mens own Worthiness; wherein being well satisfied, none have reason to think worse of the Gift, for the hand it is sent by; there having always been scandalous Ministers concern'd in Administration of Holy things in the *Church*; and wherewith *Communion* must never have been held if none was to be had where such were. And, therefore, our *Saviour* himself did Communicate where such did Officiate, not rejecting the Ministry of *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who were as bad Men or worse than any now complain'd against. And so,

*In an unlawful Gesture.*

2. For the Posture required to Communicate in; which in our *Church* being *Kneeling* some there have been who have charged this with favoring too much of *Idolatry*; unsuitable to our *Lord's Example* and the Nature of the *Sacrament*; never used in the *Church*, till introduced by the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*; wherewith they not liking to comply, they therefore refuse *Communion* in this *Sacrament* with us. Whereas all agree that *Kneeling* is contrary to no express Law of *Christ* that obliges to the observance of any different Gesture. For this is left uncommanded, and cannot therefore be a Sin; nor can it be any good Reason to refuse to do what is bidden, unless also we may do what is not bidden, and omit

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mit a Divine Command, unless we may perform it after our own manner. *Nor is Kneeling any culpable Deviation from our Lord's Example in the first Institution in this Sacrament?* It not being certainly to be proved, what particular *Gesture* he either then used himself, or his *Apostles* after him herein; which, however being no part of the Institution, the Institution is not broken, though the Posture be altered; concerning which, *Christ's* bare Example cannot oblige without his Command; whereto the Posture of *Sitting* is as uncomformable as this of *Kneeling*; and which is complied with best by them, who obediently submit herein to the Custom and Constitution of the *Church* they belong to. Thus a *Gesture of Devotion* seemeth best to suit it, being a Religious Feast, and an Act of *Christian Worship*. And it no way contradicts the general Practice of the *Church*, both now and in the first and purest Ages of it; neither can it be proved to have been first brought in by *Idolaters*; or if it were, not therefore to be concluded sinful; being out of danger of *Idolatry*, as used and enjoined in the *Church of England*, where all such Intention is expressly disclaim'd, and which if owned would be *Idolatry*, whatever the Posture were; and which, Finally, if Men have either a due value for *Authority*, or a sincere Desire of this *Sacrament*, for the sake hereof, rather than disobey the one, or miss of the other, they ought at least to comply with the Inconvenience of a *Gesture* having nothing to preponderate the danger of a *Schism*.

And thus have we briefly vindicated this Sacred Ordinance from all those usual Scandals commonly reflected upon it, whereby Men are wont

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to endeavour to *Excuse* for its sinful *Neglect*; and which ought hence to appear to be the more *Inexcusable*; although there are, further, to be considered,

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3. Others casting the *Blame* upon their *Brethren* that are the *Company* they are invited with; complaining that *Most*, and some of the *Best* refuse to come with them; and of those that do come, there are *too many*, whom they care not to joyn with therein: Presuming that the *Example* of some that are *Non-Communicants*, and the *Unworthiness* of others that are *Communicants*, may warrant any ones *Omission* of this *Duty*; which are not more certainly made *Excuses*, than evidently unreason-able and groundless *Pretences*. For,

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Neglect.

1. The *Example* of never so good *Company* abstain-  
ing from the *Lord's-Supper*, cannot excuse for any  
ones *Neglect* of it. Because, in judging what is  
*Duty*, we are not to take our measures from other  
Men's *Practice*; which is apt to be faulty, and is  
never fully answerable to their own *Duty*, and  
therefore a very false Rule whereby to judge of  
ours. Neither is *Disobedience* in the best of Men  
any warrant for the like in us; because we are  
always obliged to do our *Duty*, whether others  
observe it or no; and it is not the *Example* of any  
other, but only the *Command and Will of God*, that  
is to over-rule us in every *Action*. And there-  
fore it cannot be any part of a Man's *Goodness*,  
to abstain from this Ordinance, which God hath  
*Commanded*, (*Goodness* not consisting in disobey-  
ing, but in the quite contrary.) And though a  
Man may be acceptably good, whilst through in-  
vincible *Scruples*, and an honest *Ignorance* he  
doubts his *Duty*, yet, being better inform'd, and  
once convinc'd, his *Omission* is not to be persisted

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in without presumptuous *Sin* that calls for *Repentance* and speedy *Amendment*; and it may be pity'd, but not imitated. And though,

2. *The worst of Men* are sometime admitted to this *The worst Sacrament*, and our *Communions* are *Mixt*; yet *e-are Ad-*ven this is no sufficient *Excuse* for any ones *Neg-*lect thereof. Since we ought to beware of being *too Censorious*, and should be willing to hope the best; not knowing but such come here to be better; and from whose *Communion* none ought to withdraw, 'till they have first done their Parts, in *Christian Admonishment*, to make them so; whereby they may be likely, to be either *Reform'd* or Legally *Excommunicated*; or if they should be neither; yet this *Admission* not being our Fault cannot hurt us, nor ought it to hinder us in doing our Duty; for which only our own, and not anothers Sins can indispose us. Every Man is to bear his own Burthen, and to *Examine himself*, and not another, before he *Eats and Drinks* at the Lord's Table; and there may be here a *Communion* in *Profession* without any in *Guilt*. Neither is their either *Precept* or *Example* to be found in *Scripture* sufficient to warrant any Man's withdrawing himself from this Ordinance because of the Presence of wicked Persons. For this favours of too much Pride and Uncharitableness; and as much indisposeth for a worthy Reception of the *Lord's-Supper* as any of those Faults condemn'd in others, whereby they fear the Ordinance and themselves are in danger to be polluted. And usually the better and more *Worthy Communicant* any Man is, the more sensible is he of his own Badness, and less mind hath he to complain of the Badness of others; being more ready, were there any reason in this Pretence, to confess that

others might as justly refuse *Communion* with him.

Thus have we briefly consider'd all those common *Excuses*, insisted and rely'd upon, for a *Total Neglect* of Receiving the *Lord's-Supper*; which it is impossible for *any Thing* to justify; being a Duty so *Positive* and easie to be understood, that nothing can *Excuse*, and every *Excuse* ought not to be allowed to suspend the Performance of it. And therefore,

II. *As for those intended to Apologize only for an occasional, however frequent Neglect of this Sacrament; though doubtless, such there may be lawfully made, yet are neither all that are made lawful, nor lawfully urged to hinder a present Opportunity.* The most usual whereof are, as was observed to be,

An occasional Neglect of the Lord's Supper excused from

The want of Charity,

I. *The Want of Charity*, whether in our selves towards others, or in others towards us, both which are too often made Hindrances to this Duty, tho' neither always abate of the Sin of its Neglect. For,

In our Selves towards others.

— *The Want of Charity in our Selves*, upon whatever Provocation from another, is a Sin in its self which can never Excuse the Neglect, though it may hinder the right Performance of any Duty. And therefore an equal Necessity lies upon us to quit both Sins; and we are neither to be Out of Charity, nor to abstain from the *Lord's-Supper*, as we value our own Innocency or God's Favour, be it never so difficult to us. For whilst we are so, we shall be not only unfit to *Communicate*, but, also, even so much as to say our *Prayers*; wherein

2 Tim. 8. *Holy Hands are to be lifted up without wrath*, which will not only render our Addresses *unprofitable* but *prejudicial*. (Our *Forgiveness* with God being suspended

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suspended upon our *Forgiving them that Trespass against us.*) And yet are not all necessarily liable to this *Hindrance* who make it such to themselves; there being a Possibility to maintain Charity, where there may be a *Difference*; and to suspect it to be lost when it may be intire. For there are many *Disturbances of Charity* which are no *Breaches* of it; and there are several degrees of *Brotherly-Love*, which are not alike a Duty at all times, or towards all Persons: And these ought to be no matter of *Scruple*, (though often made so) to detain and excuse from a constant Attendance on this Ordinance. For thus, sometimes, some have thought themselves not to be in Charity enough to receive the *Sacrament*, because they cannot *Forget* as well as *Forgive* an Injury: Whereas it is not in our power, it may be, perfectly to *Forget it*; Nor would it be always advisable that we should do so if we could. And so long as our Remembrance designs no ill Effect, it cannot hurt, nor ought it to hinder Duty. Others object their *want of Charity*, because they cannot but *think the worse of him that hath injured them*: Whereas this is not only *Natural* but *Necessary*, if it neither mistake nor exceed; such an *ill Opinion* being owing purely to anothers *Fault*, (whereof we may judge as we find) and not to any Inclination or *Uncharitableness* in our selves. Others, again mistrust their *Uncharitableness*, from the *Disturbance the Sight of their Enemy gives them*; which is indeed, an Argument rather of *Impatience*, than of *Uncharitableness*, so long as it is void of any Motions towards Passion and Revenge; and expresses more of *Sorrow* than of *Hatred*; and may oblige us to moderate and shun the occasion of our *Grief*, by avoiding the Presence that disturbs us;



us; but ought not to hinder our Attendance on this Ordinance that is a Means to support and quiet us. Yea, the *Intermission of Familiarity* is sometimes mistaken for *Uncharitableness*: Which if not *Causeless*, is *Prudence*; to secure our selves from future Injuries, and to Chastize our offending Brother for those that are past, in order to reduce him to Repentance and Reconciliation; and which is no Way inconsistent with all Offices of *Justice* and *Peace*, which is as much Love as we owe to any that hath done us a real Injury. But the most usual and dangerous Suspicions of the want of *Charity* that keeps Men from the *Sacrament is being at Law*; which yet is no further inconsistent with *Charity* than as it is abused and made inconsistent with all other Duties of *Christianity*. Indeed the dangerous Temptations it is ever attended with, ought to make Men backward to go to Law, and be very wary in doing so, and more willing to hazard the Loss of their Goods than of their Innocency: But being necessarily engaged therein upon a good Cause and weighty Concern without Malice, and willing to a reasonable speedy Agreement, and there being nothing contrary to the *Duty of a Christian*, there ought to be nothing herein to hinder this Christian Ordinance. So that the want of *Charity*, in our selves, however plausible; yet is either oft in these mistaken Instances thereof, a *groundless Excuse*; or always otherwise a *Sinful Hindrance from the Holy Communion*. And as little reason is there to make Excuses from

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The Want of *Charity* in others towards us. Because, if this be groundless, and we have given no just Provocation, then the *Sin* is wholly theirs and not ours, and may indispose them, but ought not to

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to hinder us from doing our Duty. To be hated and molested by Enemies was the lot of our Blessed Lord, of his Apostles, and his best followers in all Ages. And although God requires us to *Love our Enemies*, yet he no where requires us to *make our Enemies to love us*; But if the Fault be our own, and we have given some just occasion for others displeasure against us, then is it our Duty speedily to amend and not persist to hinder Duty by it; seeking *Reconciliation* by proper satisfaction, ingenuous Confession, humble Submission, and sincere promises according to our Saviour's Rule in this Case; *when thou bringest thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembreth that thy Brother hath ought against thee; go thy way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* Mat. 5. 23, 24. And therefore *want of Charity*, in no case, ought to hinder a constant attendance on the Holy Communion; since Charity it self may in both instances be greatly promoted by it.

2. *There are Family Indispositions* also, made *Family Hindrances* to this Duty, that ought not to *Excuse indispositions* from it: Such are, *Sickness in our selves* or *some other*, a late *Feast*, an unseasonable *Visit*; or *Disappointment* of the Company which intended to joyn with us.

As for *Sickness in our selves*, if it be to that degree as to indispose for any Business, or to render it unsafe to stir abroad, God will accept the Will for the Deed, who prefers *Natural and Essential Duties* before *Positive Institutions*, and *Mercy before Sacrifice*; wherein yet Men ought to be very Sincere, and to be Backward, and shew some trouble in *Excusing* themselves; and not contrive (as is but too usual) to aggravate the present indisposition by unnecessarily allotting such opportunities

tunities for times of taking Physick. And i  
thereby our own Business or Diversions need not  
to be hindred, neither can our Service to God be  
excused ; especially in this instance which is so  
seasonable and suitable to support and sanctifie a  
Sick State. And lesser *Excuse* is there, where the  
*Sickness* that hinders is anothers. Hereby to be  
so far disturbed as to be unfitted for Duty, will  
argue *Impatience*, for which God may possibly deal  
worse with our Relation, for our Sin ; whose *Af-  
fliction* ought rather to drive us to our Duty, and  
put us upon exercising true *Repentance*, and most  
effectually interceding for Divine Mercy and  
Help in this time both of necessity and Advan-  
tage ; God being never more inclined to hear,  
nor our Prayers likelier to speed than when of-  
fered with the commemorative Sacrifice of his  
Son, who has Authority and Merit to obtain all  
we want or can reasonably desire from him. And  
so for

*Feasting.*      *Feasting*, Whereby some excuse themselves from  
an opportunity of Communicating ; because, it  
may be, the Day before they have either made or  
been at a *Feast*. Which, however unseasonably  
it was contrived, and might possibly have been  
better waved for that present, yet being innocent-  
ly used it is *Friendly* and *Charitable* ; and is no-  
thing, if in all things else we are duly qualified,  
that is inconsistent with a worthy Reception of  
the *Lord's-Supper*, and which was an usual thing  
among the First *Christians*, whose *Love-Feasts* were  
not only on the same Day, but at the same time  
with their *Communions*. And to neglect our Duty  
for this, is to prefer our *Feasting with our Neigh-  
bour*, before our *Feasting with the Lord* ; with both  
whom we are allowed a due correspondence toge-  
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ther, and may be civil to one another without being unfaithful in our Service to God. Therefore, it is not *Feasting*, but only Sinning at a *Feast*, through *Intemperance*, *Rioting*, *Quarrelling*, or the like, which incapacitates for the *Sacrament*. This is a Man's own Fault; and he must Repent of it, and do so no more; and then he may yet be fit to Communicate, and ought not hereby to excuse his Neglect.

*An unseasonable Visit*, is no better an *Apology* for the Omission of this Duty. Because Acts of *Civility* ought always to give way to *Religious Acts*. And 'tis a part of *Friendship* to promote rather than hinder Obedience to God. If then our Friend be God's Friend, he will joyn with us, or be pleased to find us Engaged in God's Service, which he himself preferreth before all Company or if otherwise, he will be unworthy our Civility, and the loss of his Favour be better hazarded than that of God's who is our Chief Friend and Benefactor. When, therefore, more Honourable Persons, or better Friends, invite or visit us than he; then, and not till then, let us turn our backs upon his Table, and pay them attendance instead of him. But since he can have no Competitors in this Case; where is the *Justice*, the *Honour*, the *Respect* and *Duty* to him, when this is given as a Reason, or made an hindrance of any ones absence at any time from the *Sacrament*? And such another lame *Excuse*, which Men are not ashamed sometimes to alledge, is,

*Their Disappointment of the Company* of some one *Disappointment of Com-*  
intended to joyn with them herein, accidentally *pany.*  
prevented that they *could not*, or sinfully negligent and unprepared that they *would not come*,  
and therefore it is deferred at present, that both  
may



may *Communicate* together another time. Now this is a *Sinning for Company*, and to make our Friend's *Disobedience* an occasion of our own. Whereas it would be greater *Kindness* to them and our selves, to endeavour to atone for their *Neglect* by our *Attendance*; and by our good *Example* excite their *Resolution* and *Care* to do so no more. So unreasonably are such *Family-Indispositions*, made *Occasional Hindrances*, to this *Duty*. Yea, too often,

Unseasonableness  
of the  
Weather.

3. *Even the Unseasonableness of the Weather* is made a *Discouragement* thereto. Which as it argues great *Indifferency*, so it betrays shameful *Partiality* in Men towards Religion; who are unwilling to undergo the least *Inconveniencies* for their *Spiritual*, and are resolute against all *Hazards* and *Hardships*, in their *Temporal Concerns*. For *Christians* that are *Listed to Fight a good Fight*, to *take up their Cross*, to *strive, do deny themselves*, even to the *plucking out of an Eye*, and *cutting off a right Hand*, owe much more to the *Service* of their Lord, than this and such like *Objections* can amount to. *Carnal Delights*, and worldly *Gain*, we see every day pursued, without *Complaint*, and to less *Profit*, through such *Obstructions*, which therefore, can never *Excuse*, but will greatly *Aggravate* Omissions of this *Duty*.

Such are the *Pretences* commonly insisted on, for a *Total* and *Occasional Neglect* of this *Holy Sacrament*. Some of which would have been not worth mentioning had they not been, by some objected; and there are none of them but might as well excuse from all *Religious Duties* whatsoever. And why they are only level'd against *this*, can no otherwise be more rationally accounted for, than by imputing it to our *Temper's* Malice, and Subtilty to ruin

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ruin us with himself, by taking off hereby the greatest restraint from Sin, and cutting off the Neck of all Obedience in this one Duty; the Neglect whereof so infallibly introduces the Neglect of all other Duties. And considering then, whom such Scruples gratifie, and whither they tend; methinks, Men should at last begin to see the Delusion and be more wary and jealous of their Safety and Interest.

But some there are, whom nothing will convince, they being sway'd by Prejudice more than guided by Truth; withstanding the clearest Evidence that stands not with their own Occasions. And such all seem to be, who presume to persist insensible under their *Great Prejudice*, upon little and so often confuted *Arguments* against this Ordinance.

In the *Primitive Times*, there was no *Excuse* to hinder Men from the *Lord's-Supper*, but what hindred them from becoming *Christians*. It is but of late, that Men began to profess themselves *Christians*, and at the same time Scruple this purely and principal *Christian Duty*. From which fatal Folly may all desist before it be too late! Returning to their *Obedience*, notwithstanding these, or, any other *Pleas*; whereby no good Man ever need to be *Hindred*, nor any ill Man can ever be *Excused*. And,

O Lord, we beseech thee, let thy continual Pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and because it cannot continue in Safety without thy Succour, preserve it evermore by thy Help and Goodness, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord: To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons, and one God, be all Honour and Glory, now and evermore. Amen.

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